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Contents

The Week 309

Editorials

Efficiency for What? 312
Mooney Stays in Jail 313
Shifting Politics in Germany 314

General Articles

What Happened to Insull ..... John T. Flynn 316
The Literary Class War: I ..... Edmund Wilson 319
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 323
The Italian Theatre ..... Stark Young 325
"There Ought to Be a Law" ..... Allen Tate 326

Correspondence 328

Reviews of Books

An Economist Prescribes ..... George Soule 330
Yvor Winters' Stoicism ..... Howard Baker 331
The Cockpit of Asia ..... Jonathan Mitchell 332
Sermon against War ..... *Malcolm Cowley* 333
The Radiant Japan ..... Younghill Kang 334
Book Notes 334

The Week

IN Europe, Asia and America, it has been a week of stalemate. The Geneva disarmament conference has frankly abandoned any attempt at important action, because of the Prussian election last week and the forthcoming election in France; and for the same reason, nothing is being done in regard to any of the other major European problems. In Asia, the negotiations among China, Japan and the League are in an almost hopeless state; indeed, if it were not for the desperate necessity to save the League's face, they would probably have been abandoned before this. In the United States, the Hoover administration is gambling everything on the hope that the new Federal Reserve open-market policy of buying government bonds to the extent of $100,000,000 a week will force the banks to extend credit to their customers. Thus far, it cannot be said that the new policy has had any important result. When the indices of business are discounted for the seasonal upturn, it is found that there is no improvement.

MR. HOOVER evidently based great hopes on the Senate investigation of short selling in Wall Street. He accepted the theory that the downward course of the market in the last few months has been the result of bear operations, and he hoped that the publicity which the bears would receive would scare them off and bring about an upward turn which would be a prelude to a restoration of general public confidence. But the revelations in Washington have not sustained the theory that personal devils are wholly responsible for the bear market. True, the inquiry has uncovered plenty of unsavory information. It has shown, in particular, how unsafe is the market for the innocent investor, and how completely persons in a fiduciary relationship to stockholders betray that trust for the sake of personal profits. On the whole, however, the testimony has tended to support the view that the downward movement is part of the general depression and that there is no guarantee that it will not continue for another two or three years. One by one, the various types of magic hocus-pocus with which Mr. Hoover and his friends have tried to end the depression have proved unavailing. Perhaps at last they may find it necessary to look at the realities of the situation and take the appropriate steps, however much these may hurt the owners of entrenched wealth.

SOME weeks ago The New Republic pointed out that this country ought to do everything possible to strengthen trade relations with Soviet Russia, not only for the sake of the benefit which the trade might confer on our industry, but also because this move would be a powerful measure of peace insurance in the Far East. If Japan attacks Russia in Siberia, she will do so because she thinks Russia can be defeated there. Russia will not, under existing circumstances, attack Japan. But her powers of resistance can be immensely strengthened if she can buy all she needs in the United States. If we decline to boycott Japan, whose aggression we disapprove, how much less reason have we for boycotting Russia, which is in the defensive position! This argument was subsequently taken up by the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, and now seems to be making an impression in Congress. Senators Robinson and Johnson, and Representative Rainey, are recent spokesmen for recognition of Russia and active encouragement of trade with her. Under existing circumstances our position with regard to

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these two Powers is embarrassingly unneutral, and our favoritism is employed in behalf of the party to which, on grounds both of interest and ethics, we are opposed.

THE Chinese Soviets have been extending their territories from the hilly country south of the Yangtse River eastward toward the rich towns of the seacoast. The city of Changchow, a railway terminus just thirty miles from an important European treaty port, has recently been captured by a general who is probably in sympathy with the Soviets, though some reports describe him as being a Communist himself. The Canton warlords hesitate to send more troops against him, saying that they have their hands full already with the Communists in the interior, and that they are afraid, moreover, of a revolution at home. There have been Communist uprisings eight hundred miles southward, on the island of Hainan, and eight hundred miles northward, in the provinces of Shantung and Shansi. The principal Soviet territories, however, form a rough square north and south of the Yangtse River, with Soviet governments in the four corners of the square—separated from one another by the river itself, on which foreign gunboats ply, and by the north-and-south line of the Peiping-Canton railway. The southeast corner of the square, formed by the province of Kiangsi, is the most important of the four regions; and here, in the high hills, lies the Soviet capital. The total territory under Soviet control is from a hundred to three hundred thousand square miles, and the total population between thirty and ninety millions, all Chinese figures being the wildest estimates.

A QUESTION that always rises in any discussion of the Chinese Communist movement is whether these thirty to ninety million people have organized a real Soviet government, or whether they are merely starving peasants revolting blindly and stupidly against their landlords, looting, burning, killing, then slinking back to their hovels. There is no doubt that many good people, rich merchants and landlords, some of them distinguished for kindness to their families and for Confucian piety, have been beheaded in village streets all over southern China; there is no doubt that property has been ruthlessly confiscated. On the other hand, the executions by the Communists are probably not one-fifth so numerous as those by their Nationalist opponents; and if the term "bandit" is applied to either side in the civil war, it ought to be reserved for generals allied with the Nationalist government, who have been practising banditry on a heroic scale. The Chinese Communists are proving themselves to be more efficient administrators than the officials they replaced. They have put into effect new land laws, new labor laws; they have emancipated women in their territories and founded new schools; they have organized an army [illegible] paigns, during the last of which they won a victory over more than 300,000 Nationalist soldiers armed with machine guns, poison gas and airplanes. Under present conditions, it seems quite possible that the southern half of China, and perhaps the whole country, will become a Soviet state. The threat to Chinese communism lies not so much in the Nationalist government as in the danger of foreign intervention; and not so much in foreign intervention as in the possibility that the Communist leaders, like other Chinese leaders before them, will be corrupted by their own success.

THE valuable reports on unemployment relief hitherto published by the Russell Sage Foundation are now combined with the data compiled by the Children's Bureau at the request of the President's Organization for Unemployment Relief, and are being issued under the auspices of the Bureau. The latest report, for January, shows that in spite of the increased need, a smaller amount was devoted to relief. This reflection of the drying up of sources is emphasized by the classified statistics from 768 agencies, which show that while the sum expended was 3 percent less in January than in December, the number of families aided was 7 percent larger. The "American dole" still comes preponderantly from taxpayers, 64 percent of the money being contributed from public treasuries. The figures cover only cities above 50,000 population. The amount of relief given is of course far above that of a year earlier, especially in some of the cities. New Orleans is spending 832 percent more than a year ago, the median change for all cities reporting complete data being 73 percent. Relief in the form of wages for work is increasing in importance, occupying 22 percent of the total. The Bureau reports, however, that "the life of a great many work-relief programs has been short."

ONCE again, the policy of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in making loans to railroads is a subject for public discussion. The Boston and Maine has applied for a $10,000,000 loan with the understanding that $2,500,000 will be used to pay off outstanding loans by the banks. The Boston and Maine officials openly admit that they have made no attempt to get this money from private sources, and that they have in fact borrowed $5,500,000 from the banks on the understanding that, if possible, this money would be replaced by funds obtained from the R. F. C.. In other words, it is confessed that money is to be borrowed, if possible, from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for the purpose of relieving the banks of their present burden. The proposal is exactly similar to the loan made a month ago to the Missouri Pacific Railroad, of which almost half was for the purpose of paying back a loan to this railroad from its bankers, J. P. Morgan and Company, Kuhn, Loeb and Company and the Guaranty Trust Co.

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tantly" by the Interstate Commerce Commission, and Senators Couzens and Borah have demanded an investigation of such transactions. The words of Commissioner Eastman, uttered on that occasion, apply to the proposal on behalf of the Boston and Maine:

> No good reason has been shown for approving a government loan to enable the applicant to make a . . . payment on a bank loan. . . . I would have no difficulty in joining in such an approval if there were any evidence that the loans were needed in the public interest. But no one has made or attempted to make such a showing. . . . I realize that the majority [of the Commission] are no more persuaded than I am that there is any need for using government funds to "bail out" these banks.

DR. Benjamin M. Anderson, Jr., economist of the Chase National Bank, objects to the revised Glass Bill on the ground that it attempts to deal with symptoms of the financial disease rather than with the germ that caused it. This germ, he believes—and has been steadily saying for five or six years—was the reckless expansion of bank credit, used for purposes of investment and speculation. This arose partly from the oversupply of gold in this country, and partly from the failure of the central banks to check the movement by proper rediscount and open-market policies. On the inflated credit resources was built the superstructure of excessive security issues sponsored in many cases by investment affiliates of the commercial banks, of mounting brokers' loans, of soaring stock-market prices, of ultimate weakness in the banks owing to their purchases at high prices of bonds and stocks which were sure to decline. There is much to be said for Dr. Anderson's point, but we do not think he has found the ultimate germ. In relation to what were the credit resources excessive? What called forth their use? Why is it unsound to carry on any conceivable amount of investment and production, so long as there are unsatisfied demands for goods on the part of persons with standards of living which are too low? Was not the fundamental trouble an unbalanced distribution of income, which left the wage incomes of consumers too small to pay cash for all the goods being produced, and the rate of profits so high that they attracted excess lending for new investment and speculation? We need better banking control, but we also need better control of all the elements of the system of prices and incomes.

MR. Arthur Garfield Hays of the American Civil Liberties Union has lately been corresponding with County Attorney Walter B. Smith of Pineville, Kentucky. Mr. Hays is leading a delegation into Bell County to see whether the tender flower of liberty still survives in that mountain atmosphere. Mr. Smith assures him, by letter, that the plant is quite extinct, smothered by coal dust, the stalk of it rooted out by his own industrious hands. Mr. Smith's letter, from which we quote a few passages, is a document that deserves to be read aloud at every Jefferson Day banquet, as a comment on what Jefferson's country has become:

> If a mad dog has a constitutional right to run rampant in Bell County, biting people and scattering hydrophobia, then the American Civil Liberties Union has the same right. But—just as we would suppress the mad dog, we will also suppress this un-American union. . . . The people of Bell County are fundamentalists in politics, religion and social economics. They are perfectly satisfied with the government of the United States as it is now administered. . . . They are but little impressed by . . . the cackling of your Union over "freedom of press" and "freedom of movement." We also believe in these fundamentals of liberty, but we believe that "freedom of speech" and of the press ought to be limited by man's knowledge of the things he talks or writes about, and his freedom of movement should cease when he endeavors to go where he will become a public nuisance. . . .
>
> To Bell County you and your self-appointed committee are just one more nauseating smell, we have had several. First there was Dreiser, and we almost lost our appetites; then came Frank Borich and we completely lost it. We regained some strength, however, by the time Waldo Frank and his aides arrived, enough to gently but firmly vomit them across the border; and we have vomited twice since. We might say that our capacity for vomiting is not exhausted when our stomachs are assailed by bad odors. . . .
>
> The paradoxical interpretation of the Bill of Rights which you propound would ultimately destroy every semblance of organized society on the face of the earth. Your program of license in dealing with the article of free speech is nothing short of conniving with blasphemy, slander and Anarchism, and every other abandon of deviltry in the world.

What did you say about free speech, Mr. Jefferson? And you, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Wilson?

T. W. PHILLIPS, JR., of the T. W. Phillips Gas and Oil Company, is one of those capitalists who rise in righteous indignation to protest against raising tax rates on incomes and estates. In a letter to Congressman Crisp of the Ways and Means Committee he protests that this action will cause him to spend less money on furnishing employment, and will "seriously interfere with gifts to church, charity and education." Similar letters to a merchant, to the Treasurer of Yale University, and to the Association of American Colleges, attempt to blackmail the recipients into support of the sales tax by threatening that purchases of jewelry and donations to education will be reduced if government revenue is raised by taxing wealth. "The greatest incentive to individual endeavor," he writes, "is the right to acquire private property and dispose of it at will and by will. This right is the backlog of civilization, which has kept the flames of progress constantly burning." We are willing to learn from M. Phillips

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the trouble to specify. Just how have the expenditures of the rich for luxuries, charity and investment "kept the flames of progress burning"? Have the flames of progress burned since 1929? Just what proportion of the national income ought to flow to the majority whose incomes are too small to be subject to income taxes? Perhaps it would be well to allow them nothing, and to expect them to subsist on the charity of the rich. Perhaps Mr. Phillips has found a way to sell unlimited quantities of gas and oil without providing sufficient incomes for the consumers of gas and oil, and simply by investing more money in the production of gas and oil. Or, on the other hand, perhaps it is his brand of gas which created the disastrous inflation of profits and of capital markets.

CALIFORNIA, for an expenditure of $100,000, last winter sustained many of the transient unemployed within her borders, and at the same time accomplished about $300,000 worth of forestry. The men were sent to some twenty camps in the mountains, to do work on forest trails and firebreaks in return for fifty cents' worth of food and tobacco a day, plus shelter. This reward was puny and the conditions were hard, but in spite of the fact that the men were recruited largely from parades of vagrants in police courts and from soup lines, there was no disorder. There being but one state forester to each fifty workers, discipline as to hours, work and conduct was maintained largely by the men themselves, through "kangaroo courts." They were solidified in a battle against the elements, making the camps habitable and performing their work, in spite of the mixture of nationalities, ages and background. Evidently they felt that they were engaged in something worth doing. Although this is similar to make-work experiments in other localities, it appears to differ in that the work itself was obviously useful and constructive. Cannot this principle be extended to many other realms of activity —such as housing?

Efficiency for What?

GREATER efficiency in the work of the federal government has been discussed for years. Public commissions and private investigators have made profound and detailed studies of the subject. Suggestions for the merging and transfer of bureaus, for the better handling of appropriations, have cropped up with every new administration and every new Congress. But little has been done. As everywhere else in our competitive and acquisitive civilization, the interest of the particular has been allowed to stand in the way of the interest of the general. Congressmen and the President have cared more for the patronage involved in controlling certain places and in pleasing special groups than for conducting the affairs of the nation as well as possible. Neither the legislature nor the executive would trust each other to remold the government machine. And there has always been the possibility that, in any reorganization, valuable services would be sacrificed at the behest of selfish private groups who for their own reasons wanted to hamper governmental activity.

At last Congress, moved by the taxpayers, seems about to pass a bill for a general overhauling of the executive machine. The New Republic has for years advocated measures designed to bring about greater efficiency in the handling of public business. Without discussing the details of the bill now before Congress, we have no doubt that it contains many provisions which are in themselves worthy of support. Nevertheless we believe that this bill, in its present setting, will do more harm than good to the national economy. That is because its passage is caused by the same type of efficiency myth which has in recent years wrought so much havoc in non-governmental industry. This is efficiency which rests on no reflection as to how the gains of efficiency are to be used. It is efficiency measured by a narrow pecuniary standard rather than by economic and social aims.

A privately owned corporation, using the pecuniary standard of efficiency, and under pressure to make more money for the stockholders, decides to reduce costs. It may do this by overworking some of its employees and discharging others. It may introduce machines and methods of management which in themselves are praiseworthy, but which result in throwing men into the street. Old-fashioned economic theory argues that the social gain from more efficient methods is sure to come. Competition will, on the basis of the reduced costs, lower prices. Lower prices, in turn, will enlarge markets, increase production and cause the reëmployment of the discharged workers—if not in this industry, then in some other. But experience shows that this result may not follow, or that if it does follow, it may be long delayed. Pecuniary efficiency may be achieved at the expense of more grinding toil on the part of the workers, at the expense of an increased volume of unemployment. Its temporary gains may be channeled off to profits and surplus, only to stimulate speculation in the stock market, inflation of credit, reckless investment in new productive facilities without regard to the absorbing power of markets. The outcome is what we have been experiencing for over two years. It is as dangerous to drop engineering improvement into an unmanaged, competitive society as it is to drop a live wire in a crowded street.

The belief that rapid increase in efficiency is, in and of itself, the goal of human endeavor, that it is the ultimate justification of everything else, has been pretty thoroughly exploded as far as private industry is concerned. But just as doubts concerning the efficiency myth have begun to be widely accepted in this field, government uncritically takes it

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over. We now propose to do more efficient work in government, without analyzing how the gains are to be used, or whether there are to be any gains at all.

The first item to be noted in the so-called efficiency bill is the 11-percent cut in all salaries above $1,000. Is it more efficient to pay workers less for the same amount of work—or for an increasing amount? Of course, money is thus saved for those who pay the salaries. But money is lost by those who receive them, and by those who sell goods and services to the salary earners, and by those who make and transport these goods. Salary cutting has nothing to do with efficiency; it is merely a redistribution of income by taking money from the workers for the benefit of the taxpayers. There is also no point in the so-called "efficiency" which reduces, not salary rates, but salary receipts, by cutting down paid working time. And what is the ultimate economy in eliminating paid vacations and sick leave? If workers do not take these time allowances, they are deprived either of needed time for rest and recuperation, or of some leisure —which is one of the values which any reasonable economy ought to increase. If the government employees do take vacations or sick leaves without pay, the effect is the same as that of salary reduction.

The only true advance in efficiency is achieved when, by a better method of work or management or by improved equipment, more work-results are produced with less labor, and there is no consequent increase in strain upon the individual employee or diminution of his earnings. The outcome is simply more available labor time. The question then arises, what advantage is to be gained from this extra time? The current and stupid doctrine is that the time should be converted into monetary gains for the employer. You place the burden of the saved time upon the employees, who, having less to do, become unemployed or only partly employed. The consequent saving in wages is translated into reduced expense for the capital. But if this practice is widely followed, the fact that there are fewer persons employed restricts the markets for consumers' goods and in the end injures all producers. The employer spends less money for wages; hence the wage earners spend less money for goods. If the gain of labor time is thus converted into uncompensated unemployment, it is an ultimate loss. The essential thing is to see that the time is utilized for the production of additional useful goods and services. The money that is saved from better performance of existing operations must be spent to employ the released workers on new operations, if any advantage is to be realized. Or, if there is no real need for any more goods, the money can be spent to spread the time among all the workers in the form, not of unemployment, but of leisure gained without any sacrifice of earnings.

Now the money which the government is saving is not to be spent by the government on other needed work. This is not a question of gaining labor time in the existing bureaus so that more labor time can be utilized in other beneficial government services, in construction, or housing, or conservation, or research. The money is saved only in order that less need be taken from the taxpayers than would otherwise be the case—or in order that less need temporarily be borrowed. But this policy is adopted without the slightest assurance on the part of the government that the money it is gaining will be spent by those who will benefit by the saving, or will be spent by them to good purpose. The bulk of federal revenues is derived from income taxes, levied on those best able to pay, and in some proportion to their ability to pay. These are the persons who have a surplus to invest. The outstanding characteristic of a depression is that these persons cannot find anything profitable in which to invest. Likewise the credit which is available to the government is not being utilized by private business borrowers. There is at present no lack of investment funds; what is lacking is the opportunity to put these funds to work in making and selling commercial goods.

The net result of increased governmental "efficiency" during a depression is therefore doubly injurious. While with one hand it decreases the amount of money paid to those who need it in order to purchase consumers' goods, and who thus form part of the ultimate market for industry, with the other hand it increases the amount of idle investment resources, which already are too great to be employed profitably in making goods for the consumers. The government is busily engaged in taking money out of circulation, while it vaguely hopes that business will put more money into circulation. It is, within the realm which it controls, practising deflation, while it expects deflation to be halted in the realm which it does not control. Governmental efficiency comes just at the time to place a capstone of folly on the crazy edifice which private efficiency, without social planning and control, has erected.

Mooney Stays in Jail

WE DO NOT propose to waste much of our readers' time, or our own, on a discussion of the latest development in the Mooney case. In refusing a pardon, Governor Rolph has acted as a man of his affiliations and character might have been expected to do. Mooney himself refused to base any hope upon the pardon action, and was not surprised at the outcome. The fight will go on; the chief present interest lies in the mental processes —if they can be so described—of the Governor and his two advisers, Judge Matt I. Sullivan, former chief justice of the California supreme court, and Lewis F. Byington, a San Francisco lawyer. We have not yet seen the full text of the 25,000

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word report to the Governor; but the extracts from it published in the daily press are ample to indicate its character. Messrs. Sullivan and Byington have decided that Mooney and Billings were "bad characters"—radicals and direct actionists—and that therefore they must have set off the bomb which killed ten persons in the Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco. Set down in cold type, this looks like crazy nonsense; but it is no crazier nonsense than the language of the report itself: "Their insensate hatred of our present form of government and their fanatical desire to substitute the red flag of revolt for the Stars and Stripes impelled them to commit the deed. To carry out their design and for the purpose of stopping the Preparedness Day parade, Mooney, Billings and others entered into a conspiracy to terrify citizens by exploding a bomb filled with shrapnel in a densely crowded part of the city."

The report does not try to explain—for the authors cannot—the inconsistency between this *ex parte* statement and the known facts. It ignores the proof that all four of the chief witnesses against Mooney were perjurers and that the most important of them was not even in San Francisco when the explosion took place. It ignores the fact that three photographs show Mooney, in pictures which also contain the face of a clock, a mile away from the scene of the explosion, seven, four and two minutes from the time of the explosion. It ignores the appeals of Presiding Judge Franklin Griffin, all but one of the surviving jurors and the captain of detectives who assembled the evidence against Mooney, all of whom asked that he be pardoned or have a new trial. It ignores the report of the federal commission appointed by President Wilson, which fourteen years ago held that the trial had not been fair. It ignores the report made only a few months ago by the Wickersham Commission, that the trial had been accompanied by flagrantly illegal acts on the part of the prosecution.

Instead of discussing these matters, the report goes into other questions which its authors hope may prove less embarrassing. It considers, for instance, the large sum of money which has been collected and spent in Mooney's behalf. Two years ago, the California state supreme court, in its advisory opinion in the Billings case, complained that since Mooney had been in prison, he had not tried to find the actual perpetrators of the Preparedness Day crime. The criticism was false; actually the most strenuous efforts have been made to do this, and much of the large expenditure of which the present report complains was for this purpose. But there is no pleasing California justice! Even more fantastic is the complaint made in the report that "Mooney propaganda" has been scattered broadcast, poisoning the minds of many persons, while counter-propaganda has been conspicuously absent. In Heaven's name, what do the Governor's advisers conceive to be the functions of the judicial system—

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on perjured testimony and then lie about the proceedings to the world at large?

It is impossible to believe that Governor Rolph, Judge Sullivan and Mr. Byington really consider that Mooney and Billings had a fair trial. They believe, as someone has said, that California "got the right men for the wrong reason"—in other words, that since the defendants were, from their point of view, bad characters, it does not matter whether they were convicted by perjury or not. Three previous Governors of California have taken the same attitude; so, despite their legal training, did all but one of the Justices of the California supreme court in 1930. It is practically the attitude of Governor Fuller's Advisory Committee in the Sacco-Vanzetti case; and is a position assumed, more or less unconsciously, by many Americans. They care nothing for exact justice; they are indifferent to the good opinion of the world; they ignore the fact that such crimes as that against Mooney are evidence that there is, in America today, one law for the rich conservative and another for the poor radical.

Shifting Politics in Germany

LAST WEEK'S elections in five states of the German Empire brought the expected result. The Hitlerites showed an enormous increase in their vote; they have come so near to a working majority in the Prussian Diet that they are demanding the resignation of the government, and in any case, it will be only a short time until they take the reins. Their dominance in Prussia also makes it certain that they will in future play an important part in the Reichstag. The most significant immediate effect of the Nazi victory is likely to be shown in the forthcoming French election. While there is reason to believe that Hitler is far less anti-French than he pretends, and is not at all likely to tear up the Treaty of Versailles and throw it into the Rhine, the French conservatives have used him as a bogeyman so long that it is impossible to debamboozle the voters, even if anyone wished to do so; and the result is likely to be a large increase in the vote of the Right parties.

Not only did the Hitlerites (the National Socialists) increase their vote in the state elections, but the Catholic Centrist and Communist parties did the same thing. The Social Democratic party, the Hugenberg German Nationalist People's party and the smaller parties of the middle all sustained heavy losses. It is significant that these results are practically identical in all of the five states, in industrial Prussia, Anhalt and Hamburg as well as in the agricultural states of Bavaria and Württemberg. With the exception of Bavaria, the National Socialists everywhere emerged as the numerically strongest party; even in the fortress [illegible] the Bavarian People's party,

Bavarian representative of the Centrist party, polled only 1,000 votes more than the Hitlerites.

Next to the great victory of the National Socialist party, the crushing defeat of the smaller parties is an outstanding feature of this election. The bitterness with which the dominating parties carried on the campaign, the fact that it was conducted in the shadow of a national election which had subordinated party issues and eliminated party candidates, undoubtedly influenced the result on April 24 in favor of the few large parties on which rests the final decision in coming events.

Compared with the figures of the last elections, held in 1928, the National Socialists gained 9,126,000 votes in the five states, the Centrist party 767,000 and the Communist party 761,000. The German Nationalist People's (Hugenberg) party, on the other hand, reports a loss of 1,381,000, the Social Democratic party 1,069,000 and the liberal-democratic State party 580,000 votes. It has always been one of the evils of German politics that the existence of a large number of small parties beclouded the issues at stake. To this the election just held has put an end; the minor parties are definitely out of the running.

The Social Democrats, who had hitherto managed to hold their own against the Fascist advance, lost more than 20 percent of their voting strength in this election, becoming either the second or the third party in every one of the five states. They are paying the price for their toleration of the anti-labor policy of the Brüning bloc, which drove the more determined and revolutionary elements into the arms of the Communist party, which increased its vote in the five states by 22 percent. Equally remarkable is the gain of the Centrist party, whose nominal leader, Chancellor Brüning, bore the brunt of the Nazi attacks. It proves that the Catholic Church still dominates the German workers of that faith, and that the Fascists have been as unsuccessful in their endeavors to win them as were the Socialists and Communists in the past.

What will be the practical result of this election? The new Prussian Landtag will convene with a majority group of two hundred and two deputies, of which one hundred and sixty-two belong to the National Socialist party, thirty-one to the Hugenberg Nationalists, seven to the People's (Stresemann) party and two to the Christian Socialists—forming together the so-called "Harzburg National Opposition." Opposed to these parties are the members of the present coalition, ninety-three Social Democrats, sixty-seven Centrists, two State party and one Hanoverian party deputy, together a minority representation of one hundred and sixty-three. Between these groups, and opposed to both, are fifty-seven Communists. If the constitutional provision that permitted the election of the Prussian Prime Minister by a plurality vote of the Landtag were still in force the National Block would automatically take control. But a special session of the Diet, called a few weeks ago, determined that an absolute majority must be obtained in the future, thereby serving notice that the present Prussian coalition government would continue in power if the National Socialists and their allies did not succeed in gaining the required absolute majority.

It is doubtful, however, that, in the face of the strong Fascist showing, a serious attempt will be made to carry out the original plan. Indeed, present indications point rather to a realignment of the political front that will leave the Social Democratic party holding the bag. Germania, the leading organ of the Centrists, commented on the election in words that can only be construed as an overture to its enemy of yesterday. The Völkische Beobachter, the central organ of the National Socialist party, assured Germany that this group would be willing to enter into a coalition with any non-Marxian party, promising vigorous opposition, moreover, to any attempt to deprive it of the fruits of its victory. As a matter of fact, an alliance between these parties is not as unnatural as it may seem. Both are diametrically opposed to the social philosophy of the labor parties, and the Centrists have, on a number of occasions, demonstrated their readiness to coöperate with the National Socialists. In one of his latest Reichstag speeches, indeed, Dr. Brüning emphasized that he had repeatedly invited Hitler's party to join the Reich Cabinet.

The Social Democratic Vorwärts calls attention to still another alternative. It suggests that the Braun-Severing Cabinet might be continued in power if the Communists in the Landtag were willing to maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality by abstaining from the vote when the government is elected. This is a desperate hope. The Communist party is not likely to forget that the Social Democrats supported the dissolution of their "Rote Frontkämpfer Bund," and that the law for the protection of the Republic was invoked by the Prussian government more stringently against Communists than against Fascist disturbers.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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What Happened to Insull

MR. SAMUEL INSULL is, as all the world knows, a very great man. He is one of those high horse-powered intellects that are the chief motive power of our present economic civilization; one of those divinely appointed beings wisely supplied by the Almighty to organize and direct the intricate functions of our society for the benefit of the general run of boobs who are incapable of managing things for themselves. This must be so, for at innumerable banquets Mr. Insull's fellow Olympians have proclaimed it. The Merle Thorpes and the B. C. Forbeses and the lesser angels in the seraphic choir of shirt-stuffers have proclaimed it. We must believe it, even if we are compelled to avert our eyes a little to avoid seeing the sawdust oozing out of their overstuffed shirts.

There will be a good deal of un-Christian satisfaction at Mr. Insull's embarrassment. The foes of the Power Gang can hardly be blamed for remembering that Insull was the sponsor of the unholy publicity drive exposed by the Federal Trade Commission and that he has been the most arrogant, insolent and unsocial of all the power barons. Already his foes have been reproved for "kicking a man when he is down." However, Mr. Insull is not so far down as some of the victimized buyers of his investment-trust stocks, who must shoulder a loss of more than $400,000,000. Neither has he sunk so low as his shares, which have descended from 143¼ to less than the proverbial two cents, nor is it by any means certain that he is down far enough for the general welfare of the public. For he is still in possession of the power and light utilities in more than 5,000 American communities, and he holds them by a network of threads which has no other purpose than to ensure his grip upon these properties.

We may now turn for the moment from the mighty Samuel to a couple of the common or garden variety of boobs upon whom gentlemen like Samuel feed. They are Mr. Sap and Mr. Slick, who reside for our present purposes in Tallahassee, Florida. Both had saved some money which they wished to invest. In Tallahassee they observed with approval the excellent showing of the Georgia Power Company, which supplies that community and many others with light. They decided to invest in Georgia Power.

Mr. Sap is a stupid fellow who does not see through the clever mechanisms which smarter men have invented to make him rich. Besides, like most dull people, he is direct, and he fondly imagined that the way to invest in Georgia Power Company was to buy stock in it. This he proceeded to do (assuming, for the moment, that there is

Mr. Slick, however, is a much more profit-conscious gentleman. And about this time there arrived in Tallahassee a representative of the great Samuel Insull of Chicago, who had just given a fistful of money to wipe out the deficit of the Chicago Civic Opera Company. To Mr. Slick, the representative of the great Samuel expanded thus:

"Why buy Georgia Power stock? Leave such investments to simple fellows like Sap. It's a good company. It must be good. Mr. Insull controls it. But you can't make money that way. Utilities are rigidly regulated. Earnings are limited. Dividends can never be really big. Equities can never grow greatly. Buy, not Georgia Power, but Insull Utility Investments, Inc., which really controls it. There is no limit to its dividends. Its equity will doubtless double and treble and even quadruple with the years. Put your money in Georgia Power stock and you will have all your eggs in one basket. Buy Insull Investments and your eggs will be spread about in over a hundred baskets. One basket may fall, but the other eggs will hatch out and more than balance the loss."

So Mr. Slick bought Insull Utility Investments, Inc. Sap and Slick now have both invested in Georgia Power. Sap has invested directly. Slick has invested indirectly through Insull Utility. But here is a mysterious situation. Neither Sap nor Slick has anything to worry about so long as Georgia Power and the other companies owned or controlled by Insull Utility Investments are prosperous. If they make money, the Insull Company will make money. Sap will get his dividend from Georgia Power. Slick will get his from Insull.

Well, the Georgia Power did make money. The vast Insull holdings, in which stock was held by Insull Utility Investments, made money. In spite of this, poor Sap has his stock in Georgia Power and it is perfectly good, while Slick's stock has become worthless. Sap still has his one basket and its eggs and they are still eggs. Slick has a beautiful omelet. What has happened? How does it happen that Sap's investment in one of the Insull companies is good, while Slick's investment in all of them together is a flop? If a man has only one business, and that business is owning stocks, and the companies represented by those stocks are prosperous, how does the man go broke? All the underlying operating properties owned by the Insull holding companies are sound. Then why is it that the holding companies are not sound? Can it be that the mighty Samuel Insull is not such an inspired financier after all? Let us try to untangle this puzzle of why an investment trust which owns the stocks of a group of prosperous utilities goes hopelessly busted. It may throw light upon Mr. Samuel Insull and his tribe. Perhaps we shall dis-

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cover that we can get along better without them. Perhaps we shall discover that brilliant financiers are not strictly necessary in order to wreck a man's investment in a company while it is still prosperous. Almost any damn fool ought to be able to do that.

First of all, it is necessary to understand that the Insull system of utilities comprises four main groups —Commonwealth Edison, which supplies electricity to Chicago; People's Gas and Light and Coke, which supplies it gas; Public Service of Northern Illinois, which serves northern Illinois, and the Middle West Utilities, an immense holding company which controls utilities all over the country. It is the Middle West concern which has collapsed and gone into receivership.

The Middle West Company controls fourteen large systems which supply heat, light, power and in some districts gas and ice to over 5,000 communities in thirty states. They do business through 114 operating companies. The newspapers have referred to it as a $2,500,000,000 holding company. That is approximately correct. The outstanding securities of the Middle West and its subsidiaries total $1,249,546,552 and it has a floating indebtedness of $600,000,000. One may well wonder how any concern could float such gigantic loans on mere notes. When the Middle West company went into a receivership, The New York Times said: "Receivership for a corporation the size of Middle West has never been known in industrial history." That made it quite a story. Nevertheless, one had to look through the inside pages of The Times to find it.

Now let us examine the details of Mr. Insull's little game. The whole structure is too intricate to be followed. Let us therefore explore a single line of it.

Middle West was purely a holding company. It owned a control in the stock of fourteen large companies. It had investments in those companies which cost it a little over $266,000,000. The company and its investments were of course controlled by its common stock—15,641,983 shares, worth $156,419,830. Hence, every dollar of common stock controlled about $1.70 of investments.

One of the companies controlled by Middle West is the National Electric Power Company. It has the usual collection of A and B stock. The B stock controls the whole. It amounts to $8,391,739. Every dollar invested in B stock controls capital assets about eight times as large. Now without dealing in precise figures, it will be seen that the Middle West common-stock dollar, which controls $1.70 in Middle West, when it gets into National Electric Power stock controls eight times as much, or $13.60. It is a long process to follow this through to the end. National Electric Power is itself a holding company. It in turn controls National Public Service Corporation, another holding company. This in turn controls Seaboard Public Service. And Seaboard Public Service controls the Georgia Power Company. By the time it gets to the Georgia Power Company, the Middle West common-stock dollar controls over $350 of Georgia Power common stock. But here again, as the common stock controls the whole, and as every dollar of Georgia Power common controls five dollars of assets, it will be seen that the Middle West common-stock dollar, when it gets to Georgia Power, controls five times $350, or $1,750.

Mr. Insull has, therefore, developed a scheme whereby one dollar has been made to do the work of $1,750 for him. If space were available, this could be followed out, and it could be shown that the Middle West investment in Georgia Power, even if all the common stocks of all the companies in the chain were owned outright, need not be more than three or four hundred dollars. This is a very mild statement. It is based on the assumption—which is not true—that these various holding companies have bought up all the common stock in all the series of companies. Of course they haven't. So that the Middle West dollar is a good deal more potent than is here indicated.

This is pretty frenzied scheming. It looks dangerous. And when we learn that among all the innumerable Insull affiliates there were transactions in one another's stock, buying up one another's securities, loans passing back and forth, we have a right to suspect that the jugglery will get out of hand some fine day.

Now how did these operating companies get along? Quite well, thank you. They were bound to. Our brave state regulatory laws result in practically guaranteeing a profit to utilities. Take the Georgia Power Company, for instance. In 1931, after paying all fixed charges and dividends on preferred stock, it had left for dividends on common stock $2,874,630. Not bad when you recall that the common stock is put down as a liability of the company at $1,249,270. No wonder Sap and Slick wanted to invest.

The Georgia Power belongs to the Seaboard, which collects dividends from it and other subsidiaries. Hence the Seaboard prospered. In 1931 it had earnings for its common stock of $2,450,000, or 10 percent. It belonged to the National Public Service Corporation, which, of course, collected these earnings as well as those of other subsidiaries. It too prospered, making better earnings for its common than it did in 1930—around 30 perecnt. It passed on such dividends as were due to its parent company, the National Electric Power Company. Fed by various other prospering operating units, it too made money—about 14 percent on its common stock. The Middle West controlled this. It received its dividends from the National Electric Power Company, and from other companies which did very well. Halsey, Stuart and Company have just announced that thirty-five Middle West operating companies which have already reported, show

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under 1930, which was a good year. Did the Middle West make money? The annual report after December, 1931, revealed earnings for the common stock of $13,383,709. It showed a cash dividend declared of $10,239,223, or eighty-six cents a share on every $10 share—8.6 percent. *And yet within a few months it failed.* This is the miracle of finance which Mr. Insull has achieved.

Now why did the Middle West company fail? Let's answer that and then we can look at the real gem in this brilliant financial setting. At the end of 1930 the Middle West had a practical surplus of $41,000,000. During 1931 the following capital losses were sustained:

Losses on transactions in company's own securities by itself and subsidiaries	$12,321,582
Write-down of investments	10,683,462
Loans written off	5,945,863
Syndicate losses	1,201,294
Reserve against securities loaned to subsidiaries and others	5,000,000
	$35,152,201

Thus the surplus was cut down to $6,311,209. It was probably cut worse than that. One may ask where all these items were when the company was announcing a dividend of $10,239,223, in January. In any case, when that annual report was made the company knew it soon had maturing obligations to meet of over $22,000,000 and no cash or credit to meet them with. Its inability to meet this amount produced the debacle. It would be more true, however, to say that it was caused by the collapse of the company's credit, which resulted from the inherently weak and indefensible financial organization of the whole ramshackle structure.

Mr. Insull created a corporation whose asset value—being all securities—was wholly dissociated from the property values in the underlying companies. The asset value of the holding company depended on the market value of the stocks it held. The asset value of the underlying companies depended on the sound valuation of their properties. A good operating company, protected by regulatory laws which pretty nearly guarantee profits, doesn't have to worry about the market value of its plant, its property. But a holding company, particularly one removed by several links from the underlying company, has no asset value save the market value of the stocks it owns. It is possible for it to collapse even though the companies controlled are sound. This is a flaw in the financial scheme which many less brilliant spirits—academic fools they are sometimes called—pointed out several years ago to the great disgust and scorn of gentlemen like Mr. Insull.

Now for the choicest morsel. We have seen how the Middle West controls a whole string of other [illegible] Insull control Middle West? Utility Investments, Inc. and Corporation Securities Company of Chicago. These two trusts own 29.04 percent of the common stock of Middle West Utilities and that is enough to control it. But how does Insull control the trusts?

First, there is the Insull Utility Investments, Inc. It is controlled by its 3,632,622 shares of common stock. Over a third of these are owned as follows:

Corporation Securities Company	949,464 shares
Public Service Trust	51,084 "
Second Utilities Syndicate	27,400 "

This is more than a third of the common stock and hence sufficient to control the corporation. But how does Insull control these three concerns?

The Corporation Securities Company owns 948,000 shares of Insull Utility common. How did it manage to own this stock? We may guess. It got the money indirectly from Insull Utility itself. Insull Utility owns 675,278 shares of common and $18,000,000 of preferred stock of the Corporation Securities Company, which would make up just about enough to enable Corporation Securities to buy 948,000 shares of Insull Utility. Hence, Corporation Securities manages to control Insull Utility with its (Insull Utility's) own money. As for the shares held by Public Service Trust and Second Utilities Syndicate, these two concerns are owned outright by Insull Utility, hence the funds for these shares are also supplied by Insull Utility. But who controls Corporation Securities? Well, as we have seen, Insull Utility owns 675,278 shares of common, and whoever controls Insull Utility can vote those shares. Now Insull, his brother, his sons and a group of insiders, including some bankers, own 2,000,000 shares of Corporation Securities. This, with the 675,278 owned by Insull Utility, gives absolute control. But Insull takes no chance even with his associates. The 2,000,000 controlling shares are tied up in a voting trust controlled by himself and his brother. And thus, with these 2,000,000 shares, the subscribing price of which was $10—a total investment by all the insiders of $20,000,000—Mr. Insull controls not merely the $2,500,000,000 Middle West company but the three great Chicago companies. In spite of the receivership, he still controls them. And so far as we can see, the whole effort now will be, not to save the investment of the thousands of stock owners and, above all, not to reorganize this ridiculous and indefensible structure to conform to the public interest, but to save the control of Sam Insull and his family over the essential utilities of light, heat, power, gas and ice in more than 5,000 American communities.

I cannot resist one observation. The receivership suit—called "a friendly receivership"—was brought by the Lincoln Printing Company. This vast utility cluster has a lot of printing to be done and apparently the Lincoln Printing Company gets

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large stockholder in that concern. Just a little side issue, I dare say.

One other word. Who has been hit by all this? Where have the blows been falling all these months? A receivership suit against one of the subsidiaries was brought by the First National Bank of Chicago on a note for $1,050,000. It will be remembered that the First National, about a year ago, had to take over the Forman Bank in Chicago. This $1,050,000 note is one of the legacies of the Forman Bank. What part have the banks played in all this? How far has indiscriminate bank credit helped Mr. Insull make all this shaky structure possible? It seems to me that I saw an item of $61,000,000 in bank loans by the Middle West Utilities. I see an item of $51,000,000 bank loans in the Insull Utility statement and another of $15,000,000 in the Corporation's statement. There is a floating indebtedness of $600,000,000, most of it, I assume, from banks. How much will the banks have to lose? Why are they in that position? There is a lot worth finding out in this business. Let us hope the receivership will not be too friendly.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

The Literary Class War: I

IN THE fall of 1930, a year after the stock-market crash, there appeared in The New Republic an attack by Michael Gold on Thornton Wilder. Michael Gold is, of course, a Communist and his article was an attempt to arraign Wilder at the bar of the Communist ideology. He declared that Wilder's writings were the poetry "of a small sophisticated class that has recently arisen in America—our genteel bourgeoisie" and on a plane with "luxury-hotels, golf, old furniture and Vanity Fair sophistication." "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" and "The Cabala" were among the things which enabled this "parvenu class to forget its lowly origins in American industrialism"—providing them with "a short cut to the aristocratic emotions" and disguising "the barbaric sources of their income, the billions wrung from American workers and foreign peasants and coolies," letting them "feel spiritually worthy of that income." Wilder's Christianity was merely "that newly fashionable literary religion that centers around Jesus Christ the First British Gentleman"; and his style a "neat tailormade rhetoric" whose serenity was "that of a corpse" and which, when pricked, would "bleed violet ink and *apéritif.*" How, he asked, could "this discreet French drawing-room hold all the blood, horror and hope of the world's new empire? . . . Where are the modern streets of New York, Chicago and New Orleans? . . . Where are the cotton mills, and the murder of Ella May and her songs? Where are the child slaves of the beet fields? Where are the stockbroker suicides, the labor racketeers or the passion and death of the coal miners?"

This assault provoked one of the most violent controversies which the literary world has lately known. The writer of the present article, at that time on the staff of The New Republic, had felt when he first read Gold's article that the latter had overshot his mark and given to Wilder's popularity more Marxist importance than it deserved. But as the letters began to shower in and kept on for months without abatement, he was finally forced to the conclusion that there *was* a class issue involved in the dispute. For equally severe attacks on other equally popular authors had never brought forth anything like this. The people who applauded Gold seemed to be moved by a savage animus; those who defended Wilder pleaded or protested in the tone of persons who had seen a dearly beloved thing desecrated. Strange cries from the depths arose, illiterate and hardly articulate.

The editors of The New Republic finally decided that the controversy had reached a point where some sort of official comment ought to be made on it. And the present writer composed an editorial in which he justified Gold's attack—pointing out that Thornton Wilder obviously owed a good deal to Proust; that the pinings and dissatisfactions which were the dominant emotions in Proust represented the illness of the cultivated classes in a capitalistic society which neither the modern luxuries of the Ritz nor the collector's recapturing of the past could do more than deaden a little; and that Wilder, without intending it and though a writer of genuine merit, had popularized Proust for American readers, tapping the main of his intoxicating sentimentality and bringing a pipe-line to every American home. It was a sedative for sick Americans; and both the sedative and the demand for it were the results of the same situation: a race of people disposed to idealism but deprived of their original ideals and now making themselves neurotic in the attempt to introduce idealism into the activities of a precarious economic system—manufacturing, salesmanship, advertising—the condition for whose success was that they must swindle the working class and each other.

The present writer was not in a position to take other writers to task too severely for coming under the influence of Proust, as he had himself not very long before written for the same magazine a long and sympathetic essay on "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" and had also published a novel not unflavored by the fumes of the cork-lined chamber. And his editorial on the Wilder-Gold controversy

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was written from the bourgeois point of view, as Gold's article had been from the proletarian. Yet it was too Marxist for many New Republic readers, who at once in a revival of the controversy transferred their indignation from Michael Gold to myself. The letters kept coming in till The New Republic was obliged to shut down on publishing them for fear the discussion would go on forever.

The situation was made more complicated by the fact that Gold himself on his side was under criticism from his own Marxist camp. He had just published and had had considerable success with his autobiographical book about the New York East Side, "Jews Without Money," and Communist critics were censoring him for having made it center around an individual: the theory was that there should be no protagonist in a real Communist work of art, that the subject should always be the group. Melvin Levy, in an otherwise appreciative review—appearing also in The New Republic—had insisted that "Jews Without Money" was "written without reference to the mass"; that "labor organizations and strikes" were "not mentioned," though they were "probably more a part of the life of this group than any other in America"—that the big shirtwaist makers' strike and the Triangle Fire, for example, though they had taken place during the period with which "Jews Without Money" dealt, got no attention in it; and that the characters were not proletarians at all, but "merely poor people" whose failures and desires were not inevitable, but merely individual accidents: if they had not happened to have hard luck, they might have turned into contented petty bourgeois. Yet it was evident that Levy himself had not always been so clear as to the duty of the revolutionary writer: he had himself not long before published a novel about Greenwich Village, which, I believe, did not deal at all with the struggles of the proletariat; and in a review of an earlier book of Gold's he had complained that some of the stories had been "tailored to meet a pattern of 'proletarian literature' and propaganda. . . . It is not merely that they sacrifice artistic excellence for propaganda: if they did that successfully, they would be justified. But they have not the veracity and conviction that make good propaganda. They are distant and unreal: unmoving."

To the first of these reviews Michael Gold made a very eloquent reply:

> I think Comrade Levy [he wrote] is too dogmatic in his application of the proletarian canon. There is nothing finished or dogmatic in proletarian thought and literature. We cannot afford it. We are pioneers. . . . It would be fatal for us to have fixed minds. Proletarian literature is taking many forms. There is not a standard model which all writers must imitate, or even a standard set of thoughts. There are no precedents. Each writer has to find his own way. All that unites us, and all we have for a guide, is the revolutionary spirit. . . .
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> To my mind, it is the task of each proletarian writer to describe that portion of proletarian life with which he is most saturated. . . . Comrade Levy . . . is disappointed because I . . . did not include the Triangle fire and the great garment strikes. Yet I could do nothing else honestly and emotionally at the time. I could only describe what I had seen with my own eyes. I did not want to falsify the emotional values and bring in material that I did not feel. I do not believe any good writing can come out of this mechanical application of the spirit of proletarian literature. In America, where everything is confused, we must begin humbly with the things we know best.

He then went on to make an interesting plea:

> It is difficult to write proletarian literature in this country, because all the critics are bourgeois. If a Thornton Wilder writes books in praise of the Catholic theology, or if a Robinson Jeffers preaches universal pessimism and mass-suicide, that is art. But if a revolutionary writer, even by implication, shows the social ideals that are stirring in the heart of the working class, he is called a propagandist. This taunt which one meets on every side creates a powerful psychic force which proletarian writers will have to ignore. I will admit it had set up inhibitions in my own mind that I have not yet overcome. Perhaps Levy has perceived this in "Jews Without Money," but I assure him that it is hard to overcome in a first book. It will take other books; it will take a group literature and collective experimentation before we can feel as easy in our proletarian world as every bourgeois writer feels in his. Meanwhile, let us not fear to be crude or propagandistic. We are going somewhere; the rest of literature is sinking into the arms of Catholicism, and death.

In short, the whole episode took place in an atmosphere of intellectual confusion—an atmosphere which has not yet cleared up. The result seems to have been that Michael Gold has taken to writing for The New Masses little Communist Sunday-school stories in which the role of a proletarian hero is subordinated with effort and with imperfect artistic success to the drama of a social group; while Thornton Wilder, apparently not unmoved by the outcry in The New Republic, has brought out a series of little plays several of which—and they are quite good—deal with American subjects—one of them transferring the Christian motif so obnoxious to his Marxist critics from the Greek island of "The Woman of Andros" to Trenton, New Jersey, and another presenting an American Pullman car with a technique based, as Wilder explains, on the Japanese Noh plays but with an effect faintly reminiscent of Dos Passos and John Howard Lawson in their New Playwrights' Theatre days. And he has been reported to have made the statement that he believed every very popular book must have some kind of sentimentality concealed in it.

Yet there is no question that the Gold-Wilder row marked definitely the eruption of the Marxist issues out of the literary circles of the radicals into the field of general criticism. After that, it became very plain that the economic crisis was to be accompanied by a literary one.

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II

But what does a revolutionary literature really mean in America? What is bourgeois art?—what is proletarian art? What are the relations between the literature and the art and the dominant social class of a period?

Michael Gold has thrown some light on the subject in his reply to Levy quoted above. But the bourgeois critics sometimes talk as if the Marxists contemplated the destruction of all human art and literature up to date and the immediate creation of a proletarian culture as something completely different and new—and the Marxists, or pseudo-Marxists, sometimes seem to lend color to this idea.

The truth is, however, that art has given rise through the changes of history to a class which cuts across the social classes. The artists, like the scientists, like the engineers, constitute a kind of guild, and this guild is always tending to be independent of class, international and interracial. The artist's tradition, his craft, has been evolved through a variety of societies by individuals from a variety of classes. And the minds of the greatest artists, like those of the greatest scientists, are always reaching out beyond the limits of their time and place. "But we to whom the world is fatherland as the sea is to fishes," said Dante, "though they drank the Arno before they had teeth and though they love Florence so much that they suffer unjust exile for having loved her—"

Yet the art of each period is bound up with the interests of the dominating classes: it is a part of that Marxist superstructure which rests on the methods of production. The writer nine times out of ten gets his principal characters from that class; and even if he steps outside it, his point of view will still be colored by the point of view of the class. His images, his rhythms, his technique, will all be affected by its habits. The artist belongs to two worlds: a classless supernational one which does not exist yet, but which the mind can partially apprehend, and a real one of which he is part.

Which elements in a writer's writings belong to which of these worlds? How much are his literary instruments, the very language in which he conveys his ideas and feelings, fashioned only for a special use so that they are doomed automatically to be scrapped with the outgrowing of certain social relations?

It is important as well as absorbing to speculate about these questions; but we can never answer them precisely till social relations have actually changed, until the dominating class has lost its power.

In this connection, Trotsky's book on Russian literature after 1917, "Literature and Revolution," is a work of unique interest. Here we are able to study for the first time the effects on a national literature of the dispossession of a dominant class. As Trotsky says, the French Revolution does not present an analogy, because the culture of the rising bourgeoisie had already come to maturity before the revolution occurred; whereas in Russia the proletariat had not produced a culture of its own. And as we are made to see the unexpected ways in which the visions of the novelists, the emotions and images of the poets, the standards of the critics, turned out to be determined by their attitudes toward the social-economic crisis, we are given seriously to think about many features in our own contemporary literature which may previously have seemed to us of the pure essence of high abstracted intellect and art.

Yet the political line-up in Russian literature was not the whole story. Trotsky could see—being himself a brilliant writer—that there were elements of the old culture which would carry through and help to make the new. He never makes the mistake which the stupider type of Marxist makes of supposing that the attitude is everything, that social-economic ideology is the whole of art. He gives their due as artists—as persons specially gifted for writing and with specially developed expertness at it—even to the White émigrés for whom he has politically the most scorn. And in any case he does not look forward to a proletarian culture which will be the antithesis of bourgeois culture. "It is fundamentally incorrect," he says, "to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art with proletarian culture and proletarian art. The latter will never exist, because the proletarian regime is temporary and transient. The historic significance and the moral grandeur of the proletarian revolution consist in the fact that it is laying the foundations of a culture which is above classes and which will be the first culture that is truly human." There would not be time during this transition period for the proletariat to create a distinctive culture—the new socialist culture would grow out of the bourgeois culture behind it.

I do not know whether Trotsky's political eclipse has had the effect of bringing his literary views into disrepute among orthodox Communists. In any case, it is true, of course, that quite different views have been put forward. One hears, for example, of Russian writers who, in their effort to eliminate from their writings every trace of the bourgeois ideology, have reduced syntax and language to what they regard as an ABC of essentials and turn out to be as unintelligible to the proletarians at whom they are aiming as if they were symbolist poets. But after all proletarian children will have to learn in their schools the old syntax and the old vocabulary until socialism shall have evolved naturally its own new kind of speech to go with its new way of thinking.

> The study of literary technique alone [writes Trotsky] is a necessary stage and it is not a brief one. Technique is noticed most markedly in the case of those who have not mastered it. . . . They who refuse to master technique will come to look "unnatural," imitative and even buffoonlike. It would be monstrous to conclude from this that [illegible]

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> of bourgeois art is not necessary to the workers. Yet there are many who fall into this error. "Give us," they say, "something even pockmarked, but our own." This is false and untrue. A pockmarked art is no art and is therefore not necessary to the working masses. . . . Proletarian art should not be second-rate art. One has to learn regardless of the fact that learning carries within itself certain dangers because out of necessity one has to learn from one's enemies. One has to learn and the importance of such organizations as the Proletcult cannot be measured by the rapidity with which they create a new literature, but by the extent to which they help elevate the literary level of the working class, beginning with its upper strata.
>
> Such terms as "proletarian literature" and "proletarian culture" are dangerous, because they erroneously compress the culture of the future into the narrow limits of the present day. They falsify perspectives, they violate proportions, they distort standards and they cultivate the arrogance of small circles, which is most dangerous.

And if this was the case in Russia after the bourgeoisie had been expropriated, how much more difficult in America to get away from the bourgeois culture which is still that of the dominating class! Yet Communist criticism in America has often been harsh in the cases of just those writers who have mastered the bourgeois technique and tried to use it to show us the world from the proletarian point of view. I have already mentioned the strictures made on Michael Gold's "Jews Without Money": and in the case of Edward Dahlberg, the author of "Bottom Dogs," I understand that his writings have been rejected by The New Masses on the ground that they were "a libel on the proletariat." As a matter of fact, Michael Gold and Dahlberg are surely the creators of some of the only specimens of original proletarian literature which we have yet had in this country. The conclusion of "Jews Without Money," in which the East Side boy who has seen and shared the miserable sinking of his family in the slums of the American city to which they had come in the hope of a new life, lonely, unhappy, neurotic, driven almost to suicide by a boyhood spent in sweatshops, hears for the first time a soap-box orator preaching the revolution and realizes for the first time that there may yet be a way out for his people, that the degraded human spirit may prevail against the slums yet—this scene is more moving and convincing than much Communist propaganda. And Dahlberg's sour and sensitive pictures of the back-yard life of the American cities, if they do not flatter the proletariat, are certainly not calculated to please the bourgeoisie. Dahlberg seems to me significant for the revolutionary movement because he is writing of his bottom dogs from and for a point of view which, however little Marxist, is quite outside the bourgeois picture, and because in doing this, he has found a new literary language based on the common speech.

Part of the rather discouraging attitude of the [illegible] those who ought to [illegible] be its principal poets is due, I believe, to a familiar situation. Marxism, like other things, has its academic side: it has its pedantry and its pretentious charlatanism. As in other fields, the people who are doing the original new work never seem quite right to the scholars; and there is always an opportunity for a mediocre writer with a turn for argumentation to make out an impressive case against a gifted writer without one. And sometimes it is the latter who is himself impressed. What one feels about some Marxist criticism is that it is the work of people who, however competent they may be as Marxist theoreticians, have themselves no artistic ability and little appreciation of art and are consequently not equipped to deal with artistic questions. Trotsky is very clear on this point: "It is very true," he writes, "that one cannot always go by the principles of Marxism in deciding whether to accept or reject a work of art. A work of art should, in the first place, be judged by its own law, that is, by the law of art."

The worst Marxist criticism has, therefore, a good deal in common with Humanism. Communist criticism has behind it a powerful living movement, whereas Humanism is feeble and effete; but Marxism at its worst is like Humanism in that both are in the position of trying to gauge the value of works of art on the basis of their literal conformity to a body of fixed moral dogma. The question is, does the work of art contribute toward a certain social end? The question itself is a proper one; but this does not mean that everybody who asks it is fitted to give an answer. What happens in the case of the Humanist or the academic type of Marxist is that he elaborates in a void, a sphere of sheer abstraction, a set of ideal specifications for advancing the end proposed. It is as if a business man, intent on the promotion of his business, who had never had any experience of either the materials or the tools of carpentry and who had never done any sitting, were to draw up careful designs for the construction of chairs for his office. The only difference is that the Humanist locates in the past, where as a matter of fact it never existed, his ideal theoretical chair, whereas the Marxist locates it in the future, where it has never existed yet. They cannot understand that art is something that has to grow out of the actual present substance of life to meet life's immediate needs. The artist, as I have said above, may see into his own future; but the Humanist or the non-artistic Marxist has no credentials whatever which should convince us that he can see into the future of art.

Thus Marxism at its most academic misjudges, it seems to me, the true roles of many of the elements of present bourgeois culture. In the case, for example, of all that department of contemporary literature which stems from French symbolism and of which the chief representative is Joyce, the Marxist assumes too easily that expressing, as to a great extent it does, the morbidity and introversion

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of bourgeois culture in its decline, it must be completely valueless to the future. This takes no account of its psychological or of its technical discoveries. Bound up as these unquestionably are with the sickness of bourgeois society, Joyce like Freud and Dostoevsky will probably continue to have something to teach us about understanding the mind of man even under communism, and hence in remolding it. And the literary devices of the neo-Symbolists may well turn out to be among the technological improvements made under capitalism which communism will be glad to take over. "The last word of capitalism, the Taylor Plan," wrote Lenin, "combined the refined cruelty of bourgeois exploitation with a certain number of scientific gains which are extremely valuable for the analysis of the mechanical movements necessary in working. . . . The Soviet Republic should take over every technical advance which is scientific in character and offers some advantage." It should be possible to convince Marxist critics of the importance of a work like "Ulysses" by telling them that it is a great piece of engineering—as it is. Henry Ford bought the Johannson gauges because they were true to the millionth of an inch, and the Soviets would be glad to have them. The Joyces and the Eliots and the Cummingses possess the Johannson gauges of consciousness. One of the principal achievements of these writers, furthermore, has been the invention of a literary shorthand which syncopates the syntax of the old literary language, and this shorthand is likely, I should say, to play its role in the creation of the language of the future.

The question of the difficulty of these works seems to me far less serious than it is sometimes assumed to be. Most working-class people at present would never be able to read Joyce; but then, not very many bourgeois do either. Yet his influence has filtered through the whole body of bourgeois literature, from the more popular serious novelists and dramatists who imitate him to the sketches in the barbershop weeklies. It is a question of technical education. Every Marxist assumes that proletarians will prove themselves equal—they do today—to mastering the mechanical techniques. Why should they not master the artistic ones as well? The difficulties of literary and artistic works are always being overadvertised by the mandarins who have an interest in keeping a monopoly of them and who usually don't understand them themselves. Art, like everything else, requires study and practice; but there is no reason why proletarians, given the opportunities, should not learn all there is to be learnt about it and bring its benefits to the rest of society just as the chemist or the electrical engineer does. The tendency to reject works of art on the ground of their outlandishness or difficulty suggests on the part of the Marxist critic as it does on the part of the academic bourgeois a simple lack of competence in his calling.

It is true that the artists I speak of are occupied to a considerable extent in giving voice to the gaga state of mind of the contemporary cultivated bourgeois and that these developments of method and style are closely bound up with this. But a really first-rate book by an agonizing bourgeois may have more human value, more revolutionary power, than second-rate Marxists who attack it. A really great spirit does not lie even though its letter killeth. Personally I can testify that the writer who has made me feel most overwhelmingly that bourgeois society was ripe for burial was none of our American Marxist journalists but Proust.

I should add that all these mistaken views which unintelligent Marxists derive from Marxism are attributed to it even more frequently by bourgeois critics who want to discredit it by saddling it with absurdities.

EDMUND WILSON.

Washington Notes

Party Pussyfoots—Little Boy Blue and the Progressives—The Two-thirds Rule—Politics in Congress

BY THE TIME this appears in print, the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania primaries will have been held and the Democratic presidential-nomination race more or less clarified. There seems, however, not much chance that they will greatly change the basic facts in the situation. One of these facts is that Roosevelt's nomination is still highly probable and the chances of stopping him real but remote. The other is that the fundamental struggle in the Democratic party at Chicago will be between the conservatives and the liberals. Of course that is the proper and logical division in politics, but it does seem disadvantageous to the national interests that the cleavage should be within each of the two parties rather than between them. It minimizes the effect of both elements, renders impossible any degree of sincerity and candor in the party platforms of either party and promotes pussyfooting and straddling upon the part of presidential candidates.

There is no better example of this, I think, than the campaign that has been made—and is being made—for Governor Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt calls himself and is called a progressive. Yet support for him is sought from the most hard-boiled and reactionary political organizations in the country—and such support seems equally essential to his success as a candidate for the nomination and as a candidate for the election. On the one side, his most earnest and enthusiastic advocates include Senators Wheeler of Montana, Dill of Washington and Costigan of Colorado, Representative Howard of Nebraska, Houston Thompson and others of well known progressive tendencies and record. A favorable eye has been cast upon him by the La Follettes in Wisconsin and Senator Norris. There is at least a belief that if he is nominated he can look for a certain amount of help from their direction, their preference for him over Hoover being emphatic and pronounced.

The opposition to his nomination centers around the Smith-Raskob group, in which are included Mayor Frank Hague of New Jersey and other similar machine bosses of

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the extreme practical type. In the past they have been the politicians whom the conservative business interests in the East have supported. They are almost solidly opposed to Roosevelt's candidacy. Yet—and this is the strange contradiction that gives the whole business an air of unreality—the Roosevelt management is and has been working hard to obtain the support of Boss Curry of Tammany Hall, who has sewed the New York delegation up tighter than the curl in the tail of a pig and will take it out to Chicago uninstructed to do with it what he will.

It is a situation which baffles reason and defies logic. If Mr. Roosevelt is a progressive whose heart beats in tune with the masses and whose aim is to purify politics and promote good government, why is he not lambasting the reactionary and graft-ridden Tammany machine instead of trying to get it in line behind him? And if Mr. Smith, Mr. Raskob and Mr. Shouse represent the conservative business interests, which consider any outspoken man who advocates moving forward instead of standing still a demagogue, why have they not the coöperation and support of the Tammany organization which has always been on that side? I give it up. The facts are irreconcilable but there they are.

On the personal side things appear now to have reached a stage between Roosevelt and Smith where, despite the public attitude of conciliation and good humor maintained by the former, the hostility is too clear to question. Its reality is beyond dispute. It may be that Smith has made an ineffective campaign to block the Roosevelt nomination and that his course has seemed to violate all the recognized rules of politcal strategy, but that he wants to stop him and until the nomination is actually made, will try to stop him, is no longer a matter of argument. The gossip that he was merely a stalking-horse for Roosevelt, about which he complained a few weeks ago, has certainly ceased, after having been squelched by his Jefferson Day speech and subsequent conversations and comments, private and public.

In this connection it is interesting that the Roosevelt managers have determined not to attempt the abolition of the two-thirds rule, which has so often withstood assault in a Democratic convention. I am told that the reason for abandoning this plan, which they strongly supported a short time ago, is that the Southern Senators favorable to Roosevelt's candidacy are not willing to give up the rule, so long and unreasonably cherished. They declined to go along. Their feeling is that once it is abolished, something may be "put over on the South"—that the South will lose its veto power and eventually rue the day when it was surrendered. To me, considering what has been put over on the South in the past, this does not seem a convincing reason, or even a defensible position, but it is the one they take, none the less.

Beyond doubt the anti-Roosevelt forces plan to evoke the two-thirds rule to prevent Roosevelt's nomination if he should obtain a majority on the second or third ballot. Personally I doubt if it can be done, but almost anything is possible. Ordinarily one would say that the candidate who is the choice of the majority would have impetus enough to get the two-thirds, and that to refuse him the nomination would be greatly to diminish the chances of the eventual nominee. The answer to this is that it was done in 1912 at Baltimore in the case of the late Champ Clark and that Wilson's election was never in doubt. True enough, but despite Hoover's handicaps, there is no such deep split in the Republican party as there was then. I cite these things merely to show that there is ample opportunity in the next convention for the Democrats to mess up the best position they have had in a presidential contest since the time of Wilson. In addition, the more thoughtful Democrats here are far more worried by the record or lack of record made by their party at this session of Congress than by any action the convention may take concerning candidates or platform. At present they fear that the administration may come out of this economy and tax struggle with the advantage on its side.

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The more one looks at the fight now going on in the House—and the Senate, too—the greater is one's regret that the present crisis in our national finances has to be faced and dealt with on the threshold of a presidential campaign. If ever there was a time when partisanship should be put aside and genuine coöperation in the interests of the country displayed, this would seem to be the time. Yet politics is being played by both sides to a disheartening extent and it will be more or less a miracle if either the tax bill or the retrenchment program comes out in even a reasonably satisfactory form.

Between the White House and the Democratic leaders the bitterness has increased to an extraordinary extent in the last two weeks. Each distrusts the other. Each believes the other primarily anxious to obtain political advantage. From administration spokesmen public statements are followed by private words to the general effect that the Democrats want to talk economy but have no desire for it. From the Democratic side comes the accusation that the President and the Cabinet are unwilling to join hands in any form of reduction save that laid down by them, from which they will derive public credit. It is an unpleasant state of affairs, involving a national menace, and as disturbing to the people generally as it is to the so-called business interests. I do not believe that either party will derive any political benefit or sustain much political damage as the result of this session, for the simple reason that the bulk of the voters are disgusted with both. Even if the Democrats muddle the economy job, enact a distasteful tax bill, pass the bonus and raise the rates in the Hawley-Smoot law, instead of lowering them, the chances are that the people will vote them in—and irrespective of their candidate or their platform. And they will do it, not because they like the Democratic ticket or party or record, but in spite of them. They will do it because, unfortunately, there is no alternative—and they are mad and miserable.

Washington. T. R. B.

The Italian Theatre

THE HISTORY that Dr. Kennard has written is entirely misnamed, but is, so far as I know, the most continuous and complete account in English of the Italian drama.[1] If its concluding modernities are pretty weak—the discussion of Pirandello, for example, is merely puerile—it supplies, nevertheless, a mass of information and record that is of great use.

We begin with the Roman popular theatre, such as the *satura,* the *atellana,* and its long survival in Italy, especially among the people, in squares, in booths, when festivals from classic times are mingled and confused with Christian events. There is meanwhile the growing antagonism of the Church to this pagan art, and the increasing dramatization of the ritual in the Church itself. The cult of the *Disciplinati* appears, and the lauds, and their evolution into a more dramatic form; the *Sacre Rappresentazioni* develop, with their settings, their dialogue, their stock characters. In Florence the *Rappresentazione* reaches a comparatively high form. Chivalric and profane themes enter into these *Rappresentazioni;* the Italian communes arise, with their democratic movement; the humanistic competes with the medieval in the theatre. The universities, as great communities, share in the dramatic history. Plautus and Terence become the influences at work in sixteenth-century Italian comedy. We have Ariosto's "Cassaria" and the greatest work of the Renaissance Italian theatre, Machiavelli's "Mandragola," a profound comment on the life of the time, soundly rooted in observation, developed step by step with the finest structural instinct, and recognized by all classes as an authentic painting of contemporary society.

Of sixteenth-century Italian tragedy the display and princely expense in the presentation was the notable feature, apart from the learning and smoothness, the idyllic and luxurious culture, of the verses. Side by side with tragedy came the beloved pastoral forms. "Il Pastor Fido" of Guarini and Tasso's "Aminta" appeared, with their delicate and voluptuous lyricism which parallels our English poetry as in Spenser or Sidney. Countless pieces were composed, up and down Italy, full of those musical variations that so spread out what slender stream there was of tale or plot, and packed with that sweetness and rich verdure that the early Elizabethans loved in their poetry: all that world of knotted rush-rings and gilt rosemarie, of green cave and pleasaunce wide, of shepherds, nymphs and the Arcadian joys, seasons, song and rustic love.

The second volume of Dr. Kennard's history opens with a chapter on Metastasio, that once worshipped and now, in English at least, forgotten author of a drama which was married to music and about which Goldsmith could write: "I might say that 'written by Metastasio' put up in the bills of the day, would alone be sufficient to fill a house, since thus the admirers of sense as well as of sound might find entertainment." Metastasio aimed at the classic elevation and formal perfection, though he was romantic in his influence and dramatic contribution. He stood out for his dramas' independence of any sheer musical support, though in the end he fell between two stools: music passed him by and the new literature smothered him. But the exactness of his relation to his century, that strange and superficial clarity combined with what is opaque, that freight of heroic qualities, "magnanimity," "generosity" and so on, Greek matters set to work on a prose plane and turned into eighteenth-century clichés, with which he swept Vienna, Rousseau, Voltaire and all the Europe of his day into a line of admiration, make Metastasio a fit subject for Dr. Kennard's lengthy treatment. The history provides chapters on Goldoni, Carlo Gozzi, Alfieri, Niccolini and brief discussions, not in scale as to judgment or length, of modern Italian dramatists such as Giacosa, Sem Benelli, Praga, D'Annunzio, Pirandello and others.

The reason this work, in being called "The Italian Theatre," is wholly misnamed involves the nature of the theatre art. It is at bottom a history of the Italian drama, in so far as one may write such a work without knowledge of the art in which drama belongs. Dr. Kennard, as a scholar, was in an odd position when he undertook the very subject. You have here as Italian material an inexhaustible mass of writing in dramatic form, full, as the case may be, of cultivation, brio, facility, tradition and almost every other element that goes to make up drama. And yet the

[1] The Italian Theatre, by Joseph Spencer Kennard. New York: William Edwin Rudge. Two vols. 556 pages. $12.

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fact remains that on the tragic side no great dramatist has come out of Italy, not even in Roman times, despite the plausibility of Seneca and the strength of his influence in the European tragedy of the Renaissance. The tragedy of Alfieri, the most striking tragic writer of Italy, remains only indistinct and impassioned, violent and generalized, axiomatically, historically and patriotically interesting, but not important as drama. Pirandello, with his exciting formula and his subtleties like a Saracenic philosopher, takes only a notable place among modern dramatists, and D'Annunzio, with his structural weakness, the perversities of his treatment and the splendor of his gifts, that orchestration of an elaborate and heightened style, is theatric only in some removed and audacious sense, some theatre that never was and should never be.

What such a type of scholar would do with such material Dr. Kennard has done. In a way you might almost say that a scholar of each epoch of which he writes is in each case speaking, confronted on one hand by the elegance, the fertility, the riddle of transience for what seem lofty miracles of literary creation, the arts and eruditions of courts and academies, and on the other hand by that confusing mass and turmoil of the people's theatre. Tragedy in Italy outside of courts and universities could not have been called beloved; and the movement of Italian serious drama started early toward a combination with music. Meanwhile, there went on the old *commedia dell'arte,* the clowning, the improvisation, the rough and ready invention, the fecundity and swagger, the adaptability to any setting, in the people's art. It is with all this that Dr. Kennard has his trouble. He never knows what to do with such burly, perpetual matter; he does not understand the theatrical organism in which it is alive.

The truth is that the subject of the Italian theatre requires, more than in the case of any other theatre, an understanding of the theatre's nature, what its elements consist in, what in it is living, and what makes up its contagion and base. In Italy you are confronted with a theatre that has brought more to the theatre art than all other countries combined have done. The Roman survivals, both in the popular forms like the *commedia dell'arte* and in the Renaissance classical influences, come to the rest of Europe through Italy, as do opera, pantomine, acting, dancing music, décor and the very place itself, the building where the performance takes place. One of the astonishing gaps in Dr. Kennard's lengthy account is the complete absence of any relation of the drama to the theatre itself. There are many interesting prints, but the scene, the edifice, the mechanical home of the theatre art—such an influence, for example, as that of the Bibbiena's, covering most of Europe and still to be seen in many a royal opera and many a modest playhouse—is never computed and the mutual reaction between drama and its housing never understood. As an instance of the art of the theatre the *commedia dell'arte* is unique in its employment of every one of the elements, words, acting, pantomime and so on, all to be seen as based on movement. Using the term in the widest sense, all of this popular art rests on the dance. Nothing so well and so simply illustrates the nature of the theatre art in all its elements as the *commedia dell'arte;* and no theatrical tradition is more significantly related to the [illegible] development in our American theatre.

Why a people so gifted as the Italians in invention, gusto, ideas, facility of expression, tradition and all the natural gifts involved in this art of the theatre, should not have produced one of the great dramas of the modern world, what relation this question has to the character of the race and its political history, as well as to moral and social ideas and conditions as embodied in art, should be one of the two grounds on which such a history as Dr. Kennard's must be undertaken. The other must deal with the immense and organic contribution that Italy has made to the theatre art in general. In a way, the first thing for such a history to face is the fact that while the Italian drama that Dr. Kennard records was only at times alive and a part of the whole Italian life, the Italian theatre itself has never been absent from the people's life and heart. If on this fact alone he rewrote his history, we should have something more like it.

STARK YOUNG.

"There Ought to Be a Law"

A FEW DAYS ago the morning's mail brought an official-looking long brown envelope bearing the frank of William I. Sirovich, M.C., of New York. Not being one of the gentleman's constituents, and being, moreover, well aware that our Congressmen no longer distribute seed to the public, I tore open the envelope in haste, puzzled at its appearance and perhaps a little flattered that a poet should have held for a moment the attention of a distinguished man of affairs, a statesman, a guardian of the public welfare. In that brief moment there flashed through my mind vague prejudices concerning the relation of politics and literature in this country: with a kind of vivid irrelevance I remembered one of the earliest legends that I had heard as a small boy in Tennessee, of the late Honorable Edward Ward Carmack who, as Senator from Tennessee, filibustered, I believe it was fourteen hours, with only an occasional glass of water to sustain him, and in all that torrent of words not a single phrase but came from the Bible or Shakespeare. And then I thought how the old Senators were men of high cultivation; yet I wondered whether that had ever had any bearing on the practice of letters in this country, whether these public men had any deep sense of the existence of a profession of letters, and whether the end of their literary cultivation were not a shelf in the library and their love of letters tempered by distrust.

But here was Congressman Sirovich's communication, a pamphlet reprint (not at government expense) of a speech delivered before the House, March 11, 1932, called "Motion Pictures, Theatres and Dramatic Critics." A discussion of the arts in the United States Congress may take place every day, for all I know, but I suspect that it doesn't take place, and it may be well that it does not. Mr. Sirovich's speech, nevertheless, must have been an unusual diversion from the ordinary proceedings of the House. That it was enjoyed by his colleagues is proved by the parenthetical indications of applause at the high places of its oratory. Yet it is a question, a question for those who are in the habit of "viewing with alarm" the course of public opinion, whether the Representatives of the People were aware of

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the precise character of the orator's views of the relations between the public and the theatre, between the dramatist and the critic, between the arts and the sciences: these problems he discusses with great fluency, not omitting to state that Aristotle's "Poetics" "laid down certain basic requirements for all dramatic theory." One may have supposed that Aristotle had not been mentioned in our Congress since the days of the defense of slavery. The Congress is enjoying a classical Renaissance, and Representative Sirovich is to be congratulated as a leader in the movement.

He has been identified with the proponents of a bill to improve the copyright laws, a reform of the greatest importance to American letters. Beyond this reform it is but a step to the defense of the rights of the dramatist and of the security of theatrical workers, a class of persons whom no law comparable to the protection of copyright can uphold. Representative Sirovich's generous espousal of their cause should merit the gratitude of all liberal citizens—*liberi amici dell'arte*—and I hope that, in saying that the question contains difficulties of which he seems not to be aware, I shall not appear ungrateful.

"The mysterious power that rules the universe reveals Himself to mankind in three mystical and mysterious ways"—the ways being nature, art and science. "The theatre," he remarks later, "being a luxury, was more deeply affected [by the depression] than a great many of our other economic institutions." And earlier: "The spoken drama for centuries and centuries has kept up the morale of the people." It is very small game: the only question about it comes out of a brief and dead moment of speculation on the possibility of ever getting the arts understood by public men, and what their lack of perception, or one may say their lack of appreciation in which the arts and the whole of life are seen together, does to their vision of their supposedly proper sphere of "practical affairs." One can only suggest to Mr. Sirovich the propriety of further reflection on several matters: whether a "luxury" has supported the "morale of the people" now or at any time, whether an "economic institution" is mystically and mysteriously revelatory of the Deity. It is clear that he does not know what an economic institution is, and I am delighted to join him in the invincibility of that kind of ignorance. But, as Mr. Stark Young has recently remarked in these pages, "We must not forget to allude to the economic nevertheless."

Yet what can we hope for from a Representative in Congress when official esthetics has suffered two generations of pragmatism and has delivered itself into the hand of the literary Marxians? Representative Sirovich can hardly be expected to pluck his esthetics out of anything but the air.

His immediate anxiety is one that we can all share. Shall a luxury tax be put upon the theatre? By this time Mr. Sirovich will have read in The New York Times of April 3 that a year of the luxury tax on theatres in Great Britain reduced attendance by 156,000. How much additional unemployment this created we do not know. The results of such a tax in this country would not be dissimilar. People will pause before a tax upon luxuries, even if luxuries are necessary to their "morale," and even if they are produced by an economic institution whose purpose is the historic one of theophany.

dustry" from special taxation; he would make it immune to the whole race of upstart and irresponsible critics. Taxation and criticism threaten the "economic" welfare of all the persons engaged in the "industry." There are, of course, good critics who regard the "universal standards of the theatre." They are led by Mr. George Jean Nathan. Far different are those who "mistake wisecracks for criticism and substitute smart-aleck comments for culture and scholarship." These mistakes were never made by the late Brander Matthews, nor now, I suppose, by Mr. J. Brooks Atkinson of The Times. A virtuous zeal against the upstarts is not to be cast out with contempt; yet just what culture and scholarship, as such, have to do with the production of great plays is not clear from Mr. Sirovich's speech. Good plays deserve "economic" success, his reasoning seems to be, and their reward should not be taken away by an ignorant columnist, whose slightest word can make or break a play with the public. "Article I, section 8, paragraph 8, of the Constitution of the United States," he says, "provides that Congress shall have the power to promote the progress of all useful arts and sciences by granting to every author and every inventor for a limited number of years the exclusive right to his writings and to his discoveries, and I want to know if a dramatic critic can come in, like an assassin and . . . write a criticism that will destroy the heart and the soul and the genius of an author who took years to give birth to his intellectual offspring. . . ."

There ought to be a law. . . . And doubtless after a time there will be one, though it is a little difficult to foresee what it may be like, and once the law is passed all problems of the drama—the relation of plays to public and to critic will be "solved," the authority of Aristotle, by its terms, reestablished, virtue in drama paid good cash money as it deserves, the villainous critics humbled. Or at least if nothing whatever happens, there will be the law, and no one need ever think about the theatre again. Certainly the government will have done its duty, and its civilization will have been proved—whether the atmosphere of American life is favorable or not to the creation of great drama. If we can buy up art with money, why can't we legislate it into existence by law?

Meanwhile this affair has no specific character at all; it is very general in its significance; for an understanding of one of the arts and the right sense of the relation of all the arts to society is not a special kind of intelligence. It *is* intelligence, the only kind of intelligence there is. When the intellectual baggage of our rulers—they can no longer be supposed to represent anyone or anything—is so ill assorted, so light in its power to sustain and so heavy in its sheer deadening weight, can we be confident that their decisions upon taxation, the farm, the tariff, are any sounder than their conception of the theatre as an economic institution that reveals God, as a luxury that keeps up the popular morale, as a kind of mechanical patent to be protected by law? What are practical men? There have never been practical men; there are men who have or who lack understanding. It is greatly to be feared that a courtly poem by Arnaut Daniel is more practical than a speech by an American Congressman, for it comes out of a real connection of word and thing. Perhaps we shall come in time to know what the "depression" is all about.

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CORRESPONDENCE

O Mores!

SIR: Your editorial paragraph on the disparity between the utterances of President Butler and the treatment accorded Mr. Reed Harris passed too lightly over the qualifying clause in the passage cited from Dr. Butler's writings. The passage reads: "In the university at least there is freedom to seek the truth and to proclaim it as found or believed, provided only it be done with scholarly competence, sincerity *and good manners*." The phrase which I have italicized so clearly sets forth the subordination of truth to "good manners" as to acquit Dr. Butler of inconsistency. Radicals are notorious for bad manners, and the university is safe from an incursion of inconvenient truth.

New York City. N. D.

Lincoln and Il Duce

SIR: On the day of Signor Grandi's arrival in New York, The New York Times published the following Associated Press dispatch from Rome:

> A letter purportedly written by Abraham Lincoln and envisaging the day when Rome would become the capital of a United States of Europe came to light today in connection with press comment on the Italo-American conversations in Washington.

Il Progresso Italo-Americano had published the long letter which, according to them, was addressed by Lincoln in 1853 to the famous scientist and patriot, Macedonio Melloni, then director of the Vesuvian Observatory.

We immediately sensed the falsity of the document and the purpose of it was very clear. The Liberator was made to say that Corsica, the whole of Dalmatia and Albania should belong to Italy, adding that anyone who refused to recognize the justice of this offended the principles of honest politics and was preparing the way for the cruelest and bloodiest of wars.

On November 23, The New York Times published a dispatch from Arnaldo Cortesi, their Italian correspondent, stating that Henry Nelson Gay, eminent historian and student of Lincolnian literature, had pronounced this letter attributed to Lincoln a "forgery." But the American press has not so far commented upon the antecedents of the letter, which are as follows:

The letter was published for the first time by Signor Benito Mussolini in Popolo d'Italia on April 2, 1920. There are two quite different versions of this document attributed to Lincoln—an Italian one and an English one. In the English version no mention is made of the recovery of Corsica, while the Italian version makes specific mention of it. In the English version, Malta is not mentioned. "The straits of the Dardanelles and Gibraltar should be accessible to all." The Italian text would place Alsace in the confederation of German States, while the English version says nothing of that province.

Even in the case of this letter, claimed to have been written by Lincoln and translated by Mazzini, we have the characteristic method employed by the Fascists, whose important speeches and manifestos frequently have two versions, one for internal consumption and one for use abroad.

While Signor Dino Grandi was in the United States, the pro-Fascist Italian press in New York published cablegrams from Rome placing the visit of the Fascist Minister in relation with the letter attributed to Lincoln. Thus, the letter said to have been discovered at the end of 1931 had been already published in 1920. As a matter of fact The New York Times in its report of November 20, stated: "The letter has just been published by the Historical Society of the Italian Renaissance with the permission of the government."

So the government, or rather Mussolini, as a discovery of 1931, authorized the publication of the same letter which he had published in 1920. Could there be any clearer or more shameful or other belonged to one of the Socialist parties, but also their rel-

"Roadtown" for Russia

SIR: Everyone who is interested in the possible development of a better social order—or let us say simply some social order—and is wondering whether Russia will lead the way, is keenly aware of the danger that the Soviet leaders and their people may repeat some of the serious mistakes that we older but not much wiser industrial nations of the West have made. Many of our open-minded engineers already feel that some aspects of Soviet planning are based on ideas that are rapidly becoming obsolescent in our older industrial systems, especially under the shattering stress of this depression. . . .

It must be recognized that the fundamental tendencies at work today in the Western industrial nations are toward a decentralization and diffusion of economic activity and a disintegration of mass production and distribution. This is one important aspect of what is called the break-up of capitalism. It is revealed on the largest scale in the relative contraction of international trade in comparison with internal trade, and in this country in the diversification of product and the growth of localism in industry and trade. The big cities are dying; many of them are already decaying corpses. Their fiscal difficulties are only one reflection of this tendency. A deadly process of obsolescence is at work on their real-estate values, their taxable resources, their transportation and social facilities of every sort. The essential vitality of their economic and social life is oozing out of them. The country is walking away from its cities and its railroads, trying to find a more adequate and satisfying organization of its economic and communal activities and a form of life more satisfying to its inner creative necessities and its instinct for security.

Only one man, so far as I know, has seen the causes and implications of this process in their fullest significance and developed an idea for the organization of community life which coincides with the underlying tendencies. This is Mr. Edgar Chambless, whose concept of "Roadtown" affords one of the most fundamental and fruitful approaches to the problem of the future physical reorganization of our industrial and social structure which it has been my good fortune to encounter. Unfortunately, the possibilities of an experimental application of his concepts in a practical demonstration in this country are almost hopeless. The process of decay and obsolescence has not yet gone far enough here to have registered in the brain of those interests most responsible and most directly affected. What is needed is a laboratory not cluttered up with the debris of vast vested interests and the rubbish of dead preconceptions.

I know of no such place in the world today save Soviet Russia. Untrammeled by preconceptions, unhampered by purely pecuniary necessities, it offers an unsurpassed opportunity to begin at the bottom in a virgin field, and apply the concept of "Roadtown" as a practical demonstration of the possibilities of building a rational organization of community life. Such a demonstration in Russia would, I am sure, have a most powerful and persuasive influence upon policies elsewhere, especially in this country. For those with any insight into our own problem there could be no better way of bringing home to the American people a realization of the error of our ways, and of the road we must travel in the reorganization that lies ahead of us, than to assist the Soviet authorities in undertaking this momentous experiment. . . .

New York City. VIRGIL JORDAN.

Socialist Prisoners in Russia

SIR: The ever growing need in the prisons of Russia compels us to appeal to you again. The life of the political prisoners and exiles, who are very nearly all Socialists, in the Soviet Union is unbearable. According to recent information, there are thousands and thousands of these unfortunates. The GPU imprisons not only those who prior to the Bolshevik revolution at one time

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has been particularly severe. Those who have completed their term of imprisonment or exile have been rearrested, and without being informed of the charges against them, or given a new trial, have been sentenced anew.

Immediate help is imperative. Let those who have retained their love for freedom give all they can. Our own needs, no matter how grave, become unimportant in comparison with the privations of the imprisoned Socialists in the Soviet Union. We must help those who carry on the fight for freedom and Socialism. Kindly make your checks payable to the Relief Society for the Socialist Prisoners and Exiles in Soviet Russia, and mail to Fredericka Baranoff, 9 West One Hundred and Tenth Street, New York City.

New York City. MANYA GORDON-STRUNSKY, Treasurer.

The Candlestick Salad Era

SIR: A reader of The New Republic, I note with great interest Mrs. Hibben's article on "Eating American" in the issue of April 6. The movement has my enthusiastic support, but I think the writer should be a little more precise. She obviously means eating *early* American. Corned-beef hash, Hoppin' John, gumbo, shrimp jumbalaya and dumplings correspond to Mount Vernon, the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Declaration of Independence and the Huguenot settlements of the Carolinas.

Surely you do not mean that we should Eat American as we are urged to do in most of the women's magazines of the country, encouraging such culinary crimes as candlestick salad, made, God save us all, with a banana stuck upright in the hole of a slice of pineapple and topped with a cherry? If we are honest we must admit that this too is American. These horrible salads often resembling more the Taj Mahal than something to eat; these revolting mixtures, invariably covered with mayonnaise and usually adding marshmallows to insult, are served in practically all the small towns of our great and glorious land and in a lot of the big cities too. No matter where the bridge club meets (it usually meets under a French name here, which makes it all the worse), what do the pretty girls make wherewith to regale the members present? "A beautifully decorated salad course was served," says the society reporter. The thing has become a menace.

And another thing. That wallpaper paste that is served under the name of gravy! My husband, who is a Frenchman, will not believe that there is good American cooking. (We eat French as much as possible.) Everywhere we go we are offered one of these vile salads, or a meat course soaked like a patient at Mudlavia, in a bath of this gooey stuff. Then they bring hot rolls made with sugar, another culinary heresy, to accompany the meat. Why not some good old corn pone, old-fashioned biscuits made without sugar, or some crusty white bread made as the French make it?

While advocating the return of the good old dishes, let us firmly crush under heel these modern evils and announce also a prohibition platform as follows:

> No candlestick salad!
> No wallpaper paste!
> No sweet breads with meat!
> No marshmallows except where they belong—in the candy box!

West Palm Beach, Fla. L. C. NICOT.

The Fascist Loyalty Oath

SIR: No act of compulsion by the Fascist regime in Italy seems to have aroused such worldwide indignation among intellectuals as the decree of last summer imposing an oath of loyalty on all university professors.

Some forty American professors have recently signed an appeal to the Institute of Intellectual Coöperation at Geneva to aid Italian professors who have refused to take this oath requiring them to accept without reservation or discussion the Fascist regime. It is reported that those who have refused to sign the oath have not only been dismissed, but prosecuted as enemies of the State.

While none of the signers has any illusions about any action of the [illegible] at Geneva, it is the only international agency to which such a protest and appeal can be directed. Scores of professors in Europe have similarly petitioned the Institute, and they have also protested to the Italian diplomatic officials.

Signatures of college teachers are still being gathered by the International Committee for Political Prisoners, Room 412, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, who will be glad to send a copy of the petition with the present signatures upon request.

New York City. ROGER BALDWIN, Chairman,
International Committee for Political Prisoners.

Capitalism Won't Plan

SIR: The safe in the office of a small-town business man was tampered with unsuccessfully for several nights in succession. Appreciating perseverence and industry, Mr. Jones left his safe open the following evening with a note pasted on the door:

> You fools—do you suppose I still keep my money here? But, if you are willing to work honestly for me as hard as you did on this safe, you may apply tomorrow for regular jobs with good pay.

If half the amount of sincere thinking, excellent writing and evident anxiety to rebuild society, wasted by so many liberals, were directed toward actually *changing* our economic system instead of *remodeling* it, salvation would already be attained.

It is pathetic to see as much hedging, apologizing, dodging, begging and pleading, moralizing and explaining, as is being done by our intellectuals all over the country. Does Mr. Soule for one moment believe that there ever was or will be on the part of our business and industrial lords this mythical "will to plan collectively"? Is he so naïve as to suppose that men who organized and manage such vast enterprises in banking, in industry, in transportation, do not know that a planned economy is better for society, that they lack the organizing ability to put such a program through if they really wanted to? Or, if these men are so stupid or selfish or anti-social as to permit this chaos to undermine society and ultimately destroy themselves, will Mr. Soule's appeals to reason turn these capitalists into far-seeing and socially conscious individuals?

What folly! What naïve faith! Why not call a spade a spade? Capitalism has outlived its usefulness. It is now a menace. Get rid of it either by revolutionary education leading to a peaceful political and democratic control, or by revolutionary action leading to dictatorship. But this continual propping, patching and reforming is futile, wasteful and horribly inefficient.

By the way, Mr. Soule completely ignores the coöperative movement and its practical ideology. Does he realize that in England, Finland, Switzerland, Denmark, France and Germany, and now in America, the coöperative societies are practising what most of us are still preaching? Does he know that some thirty million consumers (not counting Russia) in this woe-ridden world actually constitute, though scattered, a perfect economic society? Why ignore this factor in planning national economy?

Capitalism *will* not plan collectively and *cannot* plan collectively. The very essence of the profit system is cutthroat competition even if it leads to war, to unemployment, to reduced standards of living, to its own destruction! Why not recognize this truth and bend every effort to eradicate completely the profit motive which, however sugar-coated, nevertheless contains the poison which ultimately kills?

New York City. HERMAN LIEBMAN.

[It is difficult to understand why persons who apparently believe in a collectively planned economy so ardently as does Mr. Liebman object to argument in its favor. I never said I expected to convert the capitalists; he is probably right that they will not be converted. But is there any harm in trying to convert others? It is just conceivable that if enough people come to understand the ideas involved and see the desirability of the goal, and if they find out that the capitalists won't do anything about it, even Mr. Liebman's party might become a force to be reckoned with. Conventional socialist and communist appeals in this country appear, so far, to have been even more ineffective than the despised words

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An Economist Prescribes

Recovery: The Second Effort, by Sir Arthur Salter, K.C.B. New York: The Century Company. 353 pages. $3.

IN 1920 John Maynard Keynes published "The Economic Consequences of the Peace." His book had a large sale and an immense prestige among intelligent people. Yet, so far as can be seen, it had no effect on the course of events; at least it had so little effect that we have had to live through the dire consequences which he foresaw. These consequences, be it noted, were not primarily of the War itself, but of the settlement which followed it. It is a fashion nowadays to say that after a great war a great depression is inevitable. That is an easy way to shoulder off on history the contemporary responsibility for governing affairs intelligently.

Here is another book, by another Englishman, which is receiving in some degree the same kind of reception which was accorded to the Keynes prophecy. It traces in detail the course of events which the earlier work forecast—as well as others which were not predicted. The author, though not so penetrating as the Cambridge economist, and not possessed of so lively and just a style, is well equipped for his task. He has the same type of ranging, flexible, generous mind. He has the capacity, common among Englishmen who have mingled as intellectuals in public affairs, to remain above the battle and to trust in reason tempered by common sense. An example of the best that the British Civil Service produces, he found an unparalleled opportunity to observe the European scene as Director of the Economic and Finance Section of the League of Nations. Like Mr. Keynes, he not only describes comprehensively what has taken place, but outlines a remedy—the kind of remedy that would be employed if men like himself were in charge. And one suspects that his remedy, like Mr. Keynes's, will not be used.

The argument of the book will be familiar to those who have followed the work of the more intelligent economists for the past few years; there is little original here, but nowhere else have the details been woven together as a whole. The world, in its first attempt at recovery after the War, assumed that all that was necessary was to reconstitute the going institutions which had been familiar. For a while the endeavor looked successful on the surface, but deeper maladjustments continued and could not be permanently suppressed. We cannot go back; we must go forward to more drastic changes. Laissez-faire probably never worked so well as Sir Arthur assumes it did, but at any rate he is right that so many controls have been introduced—both private and public—that it cannot be restored.

Those who, by calling the chief cause of the depression international, exempt the United States from any responsibility for it, would do well to pay close attention to Sir Arthur's third chapter. From the point of view of Europe, the United States is a foreign country, and one, moreover, in which important disturbing influences arose. Our inflation of credit, our reckless speculation, our foolish lending, our overproduction of agricultural products, our unbalanced policy of stabilizing some prices while others remained free, our tariff—these helped immensely to unsettle other countries. Then, too, the origins of the business cycle may be traced in the internal economy of every [illegible] of these origins Sir Arthur ex- stress on the disparity between the rapid growth of productivity and the slower growth of consumers' purchasing power, between the swift accumulation of capital investment and the tardy increase of wages.

Crashing down on the normal depression of the cycle came the international credit collapse in 1931. Without this, an upturn might conceivably have begun. International trade and the payment of governmental debts had been kept going largely on the basis of lending by the great creditor countries. But new lending to debtors pyramids obligations, and eventually these obligations must become too heavy. The crash would have been inevitable some time; it came at this time because the debtor countries were already weakened by depression, and political uncertainty assailed the confidence of the lenders. The first domino to fall was the Austrian Creditanstalt; Germany followed; then British exchange collapsed because of large British loans in Germany; the last standing dominos, France and the United States, have wavered but not fallen. Reparations and war debts were important in creating this situation because they were debts not represented by increased capacity for production and export in the countries which owed them. Tariffs were important because they lessened the trade by which international debts, public and private, could be paid. And when the crisis came, every country protected itself by still further interrupting the exchange of goods and money.

Sir Arthur does much to put in its proper place the discussion of the gold standard. Gold was not primarily the villain of the piece; it was the victim. When international trade and payments are fluctuating about a normal balance, the gold standard can work. A balance of payments from one nation to another, not met by credit, must be settled in gold. But sooner or later the gold must flow back, if the paying nation is to have sufficient gold reserves. According to classical theory, this will happen naturally. The nation having a diminished gold supply will suffer falling prices; that having an increased one will experience rising prices; the nation of high prices will buy more in that of lower prices; the balance of trade will be reversed, and so will the flow of gold. There is dispute as to whether this process ever operated; certainly it did not operate after the War. When the balance of payments flows continuously in one direction, so will gold, and when gold does so, the nation losing gold eventually has to stop the export of it and let the exchange value of its currency seek its own level. The same thing would happen, under like circumstances, no matter what our monetary standard. The essential task is to straighten out the balance of trade and of payments by other means as long as we cannot rely on gold to do so.

How can we untangle this confusion? Sir Arthur recommends a series of measures to make possible the operation of our economy without abolishing the private ownership of capital. By a policy of easy credit and governmental borrowing to put purchasing power into circulation, the United States and France could start an upward movement of trade and prices. Other countries would benefit by the overflow; they in turn would be enabled to follow suit. Central banks in the several countries, in coöperation with a strengthened and improved international bank, could help to raise the price level to that say, of 1928, and keep it there. Tariffs would be gradually reduced by agreement. Cartels would be subject to governmental control to prevent the maintenance of unduly high prices. Reparations and war debts would be drastically reduced

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turn of which would vary with prosperity and the price level. New international lending would be controlled by national syndicates, on an intelligent basis. Political security would be created by implementing the Kellogg Pact and adjusting it to the League Covenant; then France might consent to disarmament. A far higher degree of foresight and economic planning would be introduced over the important factors of our economy, both nationally and internationally.

All this could be done. It is what intelligent capitalists and governments would do, if they wanted to make their order work smoothly. The challenge of such a program is worth making; it has a solid educational value. But the trouble is that capitalists and governments probably are, even now, more concerned with preserving and enhancing special interests than they are with the system as a whole. The new wine would break the old bottles. Our order is not one in which the Keyneses and the Salters are allowed to run things.

GEORGE SOULE.

Yvor Winters' Stoicism

The Journey and Other Poems, by Yvor Winters. Ithaca, N. Y.: The Dragon Press. 29 pages. $1.

The Proof, by Yvor Winters. New York: Coward-McCann. 64 pages. $1.

MANY ATTACKS have been made during the last few years on the romantic tradition in literature. As devastating as any of them is the new volume of poetry by Yvor Winters. In "The Journey and Other Poems" there is, of course, not one word against romanticism; but there are in these heroic couplets very much of the classic way of writing and a good deal of the classic way of feeling. These poems invite comparisons with the accepted masterpieces. They are clear reflections of a contemporary state of mind; and this becomes doubly convincing when one notices that they contain exactly the same tone and direction as the earlier free-verse poems in "The Proof."

Mr. Winters is an excellent observer of Nature. He is interesting here, as doubtless all good poets are, because he sees in the detail a symbol for the whole: "the faint hoof of a deer" stands as a description of the physiology, habits, disposition and environment of the deer, and the deer itself is a symbol of something else—in this case, rural California of a few decades ago. Nature is ordinarily only the crude material which Mr. Winters uses for his various purposes. Occasionally, however, nature carries him into a rhapsody, which often has an elusive magnetism similar to the quality of Paul Valéry's verse. In "The Proof," for instance, these are the concluding lines of "The Fable"; the observer is standing on a beach:

> And listen, now,
> The foam receding down the sand silvers
> Between the grains, thin, pure as virgin words,
> Lending a sheen to Nothing, whispering,
> Flower-surface sucked away, discriminate.
> I found a fable here, but it is gone.
> The mind alone is mind, and it must wait.

This is excellent poetry. But the distinctly classical thing about it comes out in the last line: the emotion is held under check by the intelligence. There is always this check. Yvor Winters delves eagerly into his world of nature, is sometimes entranced by its fleeting abundance, is often saddened by its instability, but always comes away convinced of its essential meaninglessness. In each case his experience he is thrown back on a moral attitude, an attitude of stoicism.

Nature for Mr. Winters does not offer any real variety of experience. His approach is not scientific; he is not a naturalist. Nature, instead, gives him merely a set of symbols which have a moral rather than a natural significance. His method is that which was demanded by Dr. Johnson, *i. e.* that the poet write not about a rose, but about *the* rose. There is, for instance, throughout the poems in "The Proof" a repetition of certain key words, for which the hasty critics will mistakenly condemn the author. Words like "rock," "crumbling" and "flower" in various forms symbolize the qualities mentioned above: stoicism, change, abundance. They are equivalent to such terms in conventional figurative language as "Job," "Mutability" and "Flora." It is entirely right and necessary that Mr. Winters create his own symbolic language, for mythology wears out, and must constantly be renewed. The English poets of the classic period had possibly a more generally accepted mythology than we; but each—say, Milton, Dryden or Pope—created in essentials his own mythology.

Yvor Winters' command over the technique of poetry is demonstrated by his power in handling various forms. "The Proof" contains free-verse and blank-verse poems, songs and sonnets—all exquisite and vigorous. The undertaking of the heroic couplet (this undertaking in itself is a sign of unusual vigor) seems to have caused him no embarrassment. "The Journey" and the other poems show the same finish, develop the same themes and are grounded on the same attitude. The actual procedure, of course, is modified to suit the new medium: the heroic couplet has brought along with it the didactic, satiric and allegoric methods. From the point of view of many readers, these methods will be to Mr. Winters' advantage, for they provide automatically the documentation which the reader had to provide in order clearly to comprehend some of the earlier, shorter poems.

In the didactic method, "On a View of Pasadena from the Hills" is a penetrating study of the pathos and insanity of a present-day financial and industrial society. It is gentle and clear-sighted, an excellent analysis of an American scene.

"The Critiad" is not so gentle. In this satiric "poetical survey of recent criticism" Mr. Winters plays catch-as-catch-can with most of the prominent critics of the country. He plays roughly and wittily, and not always with fine discrimination. He does not attain, except perhaps in a few lines, the biting malice of Pope—"The Critiad," of course, is modern parallel with "The Dunciad"—instead, the spirit of his satire frequently becomes similar to that of Dryden. Despite the unevenness of the caricatures, a fault explained by the vastness and unorganized state of this country, one feels that the pages of this Who's Who in criticism are spattered with quite a bit of blood. It, however, is not so much the blood of the critics as of their brain-children.

Perhaps the best work in this volume is to be found in the allegoric pieces. These are built on the narrative scheme. The couplets are highly vitalized by the lessons which their author has learned from the French Symbolists and from his study of the lyric. "The Journey" is concerned with the significance of a life experience; indeed, it rises so cleanly out of a Rocky Mountain country and people that it becomes a terrifying cold epitome of a racial experience.

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frailties is the underlying motivation of Yvor Winters' poetry. It is an austere and not too congenial voice that one hears. Sometimes one feels oneself thrown in contact with the burning flesh and blood of the poet; the experience is repelling and will doubtless cause some careless readers to accuse Mr. Winters of egotism. But living is a dark experience, and the poet who realizes this thoroughly is likely to charge his lines with a good deal of passion. And this is not to say that there is a lack of sweetness; there is a tempered, classic sweetness.

Where does Mr. Winters' stoicism come from? A study of his poetry, particularly of "Strength out of Sweetness" (in "The Proof"), suggests that it comes fundamentally from the Protestant tradition of the northern United States. Philosophically he is a sound poet; his attitude seems to have grown sturdily out of one of our immediate traditions. But this Protestantism, if it is Protestantism, as one sees it in a poem like "The Marriage," has been rendered fruitful by contact with the more human tradition of English and French letters. In pure poetic genius he is comparable with Allen Tate. As a whole, he is one of the foremost poets of our day. HOWARD BAKER.

The Cockpit of Asia

The World's Danger Zone, by Sherwood Eddy. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 119 pages. $1.

Manchuria: The Cockpit of Asia, by Colonel P. T. Etherton and H. Hessell Tiltman. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 327 pages. $3.

Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict, by Owen Lattimore. New York: The Macmillan Company. 311 pages. $3.

THE FIRST TWO of these books deal with the present crisis in the Far East. Mr. Eddy fears that events are leading rapidly to war between Japan and Soviet Russia; Colonel Etherton and Mr. Tiltman apparently believe a war will be avoided. Mr. Lattimore's "Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict," despite its title and a half-dozen hasty footnotes on the Japanese occupation, is primarily a far-ranging essay on theories of history, and depends nearly as much on Oswald Spengler as on Manchuria.

Mr. Eddy is, of course, a great expert on the Far East, and is one of the spiritual fathers of the present westernized, Christianized Chinese government. Last September he was in Mukden during its midnight bombardment by the Japanese, and from then until his return to America, he apparently had a very unhappy time. He was desperately anxious to have the League do something to stop Japan's advance, and his cabled appeals to Geneva were in vain. He was rudely treated by the Japanese military, and when he went south into China proper, his speeches were mocked at by godless Chinese communists.

Unless the League acts effectively and at once against Japan, Mr. Eddy fears that all China will go communist, and ally itself with Russia. If necessary, Mr. Eddy would have the United States join with the League in establishing a boycott of Japanese commerce. "While it is true that an economic boycott might lead to war"—so runs Mr. Eddy's curious argument—"it is even more true that aggressive action on the part of Japan may lead to another world war which may well drag us all into its flaming crater." Which sounds oddly like arguments in favor of the "war to end war" in 1917.

Despite a verbose and sometimes confused style and a generally high Tory outlook on international politics, Colonel Etherton is an ex-official of Chinese Turkestan and ex-assistant judge of the extraterritorial courts in China—a sort of second-line British proconsul. Since he is an old Far Eastern "hand," it seems a pity he has kept to commonly known facts, and not drawn upon his special knowledge to clear up the mysteries presented by Japan's sudden and violent aggression. For example, he and Mr. Tiltman base their discussion of Japanese imperial policy upon the well known and widely circulated "Tanaka Memorial," which sets forth that Japan's "primary move" must be "to crush the United States." The authors merely state that "the authenticity of this document has not been denied." Unfortunately for them, in February, after their book presumably had gone to the printer, it was denounced in its entirety by the Japanese Foreign Office. Mr. Eddy, in "The World's Danger Zone," calls it "probably spurious." Other experts hold it genuine, but consider certain of its more flamboyant passages, notably the one about America, subsequent embroideries.

Mr. Lattimore, author of the third book, has recently spent nine months in Manchuria, living in medieval roadside inns and mud-walled peasant huts. He has traced out buried fortifications, collected Manchu legends, translated sixteenth and seventeenth-century records. From all this he has built a highly ingenious theory of Manchuria's place in Chinese history. China's ruling families have customarily dwelt north of the Yellow River; their highest political energy has gone into maintaining supremacy over South China. In the recurrent civil wars between North and South China, Manchuria has for centuries constituted a "reservoir" of rude and fierce fighting men, whom the northern Chinese were accustomed to call upon for help. The Manchu "conquest," from Mr. Lattimore's researches, turns out to have been a series of political deals, in which one faction of Chinese politicos first invited in the Manchu leader, and later, as a clever maneuver to ensure their grip on the spoils of office, adopted him as their candidate for Emperor. In the same way, in 1927, the northern Chinese warlords asked old Marshal Chang Tso-lin to protect them from the armies of the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek, at the present time, hopes that the personal troops of Chang Hsiao-liang will succeed in saving him from the wrathful Cantonese. From the point of view of China, Manchuria has never been a frontier of expansion towards Mongolia and Siberia; in Mr. Lattimore's brilliant phrase, it has been "a frontier facing inward."

The explosive driving force of communist Russia may be sufficient to penetrate and possess Manchuria; Japan cannot do it. Mr. Lattimore embraces the Spenglerian concepts of "old" and "new" cultures; Manchuria and China are "old," and their relationship is close and fixed. Japan, being likewise "old," will not be able to alter this relationship or replace it. Using Spengler's doctrine as a kind of brush hook, Mr. Lattimore exposes what he considers the hopelessly repetitive cultural structures of Manchuria, China and Japan, and their counterparts in America and Europe as well. It is immensely shrewd and entertaining, and not less so for the fact that Mr. Lattimore has a detached, civilized, gleaming and Santayana-like wit.

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Sermon against War

The Horror of It: Camera Records of War's Gruesome Glories, arranged by Frederick A. Barber. New York: Brewer, Warren and Putnam. 111 pages. $1.50.

THIS BOOK is a pictorial sermon against war, suggesting the illustrated sermons against hell that were often preached in the Middle Ages. It offers "a silent but heartrending plea," says Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt in her foreword, "that courts, round tables, conventions and conferences shall speedily become the substitute for battlefields." Specifically it consists of a hundred-odd war photographs taken from various public and private collections, which are mentioned by the editor in a brief introductory note. Conspicuously absent from the list is the United States Department of War. The use of photographs from its archives was refused on the ground that they might cause unnecessary pain to the relatives of fallen heroes, and might also—though this second thought remained unspoken—interfere with enlistments during that coming war to which good army men look forward. The editor's acknowledgement to the Societäts-Verlag, of Frankfurt, "for permission to include pictures from their publications" seems a very inadequate way of saying that more than half the material in the book, including almost all the best of it, is taken directly from two German works, "Kamerad im Westen" and "Krieg dem Kriege." But the pictures, whatever their source, are being presented for the first time to the American public, and they are shattering documents.

They were selected, apparently, on the basis of their capacity to arouse horror and moral indignation. Here are photographs of soldiers marching through burning towns, or waiting with fixed bayonets to go over the top, or burying their fallen comrades in mass graves that are immense puddles of water, mud and decomposing flesh; photographs of rebellious civilians hanged from gallows as long as a city block; of famine refugees with distended bellies and fleshless limbs; of mutilated veterans—one of them has his upper jaw and his nose shot away, leaving a great V-notch where his face should be, yet he stares into space with indifferent eyes—and always the photographs of corpses, dog-gnawed, flame-charred, fly-covered, putrefying or headless, as if to enforce the lesson that war is death, always and only death, under every circumstance of violence or degradation. And the same lesson is reëmphasized in the brief snatches of text beneath and beside the pictures.

Precisely because there is so little of it, and because the mind is so well prepared for receiving it by all these mortuary images, the question of text is vastly important in books of this nature. There are several different fashions of titling the photographs. "Kamerad im Westen," for example, has purely informative titles—subject, place and date, nothing more. One reads, beneath the picture of ten helmeted German soldiers with fixed bayonets, "In a dugout during the barrage—the Vosges, summer of 1918." This is enough to explain the look on the faces of the soldiers, the mixture of dullness and desperation: their still persistent hope of a victorious war and a conquered Paris, even their joy in having their picture taken, are dissolving into the thought of dying in ten minutes, in twenty minutes, as soon as the German drum fire gives way to the tic-tac of Hotchkiss guns. "Krieg dem Kriege" follows another method, that of irony. Thus it reprints the words of a German pastor—"War is absolutely necessary in that it provides us with a means of education by which Youth can be trained up to virtue and national consciousness"—and above them shows the corpse of a youth thus virtuously trained, his arm half torn away, his chest pitted with shrapnel, his face a yellow grin, his bowels escaping from his torn belly.

The present volume follows neither of these methods, the factual nor the ironic. Its fashion of titling pictures is briefly and blindly sentimental. "Bones," "Derelict," "Silent," "Harvest" (of corpses, naturally), "Cannon Fodder," "Watery Grave"—these are fair samples of its signposts to the reader. A photograph of shock troops advancing behind a smoke screen is called, of all things, "Flight." The picture of the ten German soldiers in the dugout is here reproduced under the title of "Cold Steel." The dead boy with his belly torn open is "A Mother's Son"—and why not? Accompanying the pictures are some of the worst war poems ever written, the work of Robert W. Service, Richard Le Gallienne and their lesser imitators—poems which haven't even the strong stench of corpses, but merely smell rancid, like a dead mouse under the floor.

Not only does this sentimental attitude destroy the effect of what would otherwise be terrific documents, by mixing their vitriol with treacle: it also reveals an important weakness of many pacifists, and perhaps of the American pacifist movement in general. One can safely say that the editor of the present volume and most of his like-minded associates don't know what it's all about. They don't know what is the cause of a war, or how it can be prevented, or what is its worst result. Death? We must all die anyway, and there isn't much doubt that cancer and pneumonia, during the twentieth century, have caused more deaths than machine guns or high-explosive shells. War does something else. It destroys not only human lives, but human ideas, emotions, attachments, living standards, means of production, everything that unites individuals into a unity more important than themselves; war is the suicide of a civilization.

And a new world war seems nearer today than at any other moment since 1918. The battle of oil continues in Persia and Venezuela, the battle of rubber in Liberia and Malaysia, the battle of cotton markets in China, of steel and railroads in Manchuria; the battle for mere subsistence continues everywhere among working people who listen to the whisper that the government would feed them all, give them silk shirts and automobiles, if only another war could be declared. Meanwhile, the opposition to war, both in this country and in western Europe, is conducted by people who have the best intentions, the noblest indignation, the most Christian sentiments, but don't know what it's all about. Sentiments are easy to deflect into other channels; a noble but uninformed hatred of war is likely to be transformed into a ferocious hatred of the Germans or the Japanese. Many of our most distinguished American pacifists, including the heads of peace societies, were easily convinced that our defense of the Morgan loans and the Dupont munition contracts was a "war to end war." Others have lately been calling for an anti-Japanese embargo which would lead to fighting almost inevitably. If our best minds continue to hold the illusion that war can be prevented by prayers and poultices, by heartrending appeals to "courts, round tables, conventions and conferences," while the struggle for raw materials and export markets continues all over the world, and international debts pile up, and tariffs rise higher week by week—why, then, we might as well resign ourselves to watching the death of our present world society.

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The Radiant Japan

The Mother, by Yusuke Tsurumi. New York: Rae D. Henkle. $2.50.

"THE MOTHER," by Yusuke Tsurumi, is a first novel covering one of the most exciting periods in Japanese history, the years between 1900 and 1917. Many striking national events are brought before the reader by the part they play in the lives of the main characters: the victory of the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese war, the annexation of Korea in 1910, etc. The climax of the story occurs during the World War, when the success of the heroine, a young widow in business, depends upon its continuance. The importance of war to Japan is shown to the reader without editorial comment; for, with the failure of Woodrow Wilson's peace plan, the heroine's business is saved.

Sumio Okawa, "a dreamer infatuated with the Occident," having fallen in love at sight one radiant May day, romantically weds Asako, a shopkeeper's daughter. He is of superior station and inherits large interests in a bank. After the Russo-Japanese war there is a big business boom. The rich Sumio spends more and more time with the geisha girl Hamako, neglecting Asako, now the mother of two children. Asako's emotions are analyzed. It is through her determination to regard Sumio as a son and not to resent his dereliction that she wins him back. Soon after their reconciliation there is a run on the bank; Sumio dies, leaving Asako penniless with three small children to educate.

The hero of the book is Susumu, the son, as the heroine is the mother, Asako. Their struggles are simple and are mainly economic. In the end, the mother, through the help of Hamako and of Hasegaya, an emancipated woman social worker, achieves her ambition, which is the education of her children and their economic security. While still a young woman, she dies, leaving Susumu an orphan at sixteen.

> He felt the solitude and melancholy of a person forsaken by the whole world. The sudden darkness of that world seemed to swallow his body and soul.
>
> "If mother dies, what incentive will I have to live?" His breath came chokingly. He realized for the first time that he was living solely for his mother. Ambition, fame, wealth and love! These were not the motives that moved him. His sole raison d'être was his mother.

This is reminiscent of a much more powerful book, Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers." It is interesting to note that the Japanese, too, are suffering in the throes of the Oedipus complex and that their way out, so far, is patriotism. The book ends with the words of the dying mother: "The room is dark, but mother's mind is bright. Father was fond of bright and cheerful things. You will grow up to be a radiant person . . . the radiant May . . . the radiant Japan. . . ."

As a piece of literature "The Mother" is shallow. Tsurumi has not the imaginative power and vitality of Lady Murasaki, or the humor and elegant subtlety of Sei Shonagon in the Heian period of Japan. Yet there is a simplicity in the narrative, an easy color, that will hold the attention of the reader, and the book has some importance as a social document. In his introduction to the original (twice as long as the translation he has prepared for Eng- reason I write novels is that I wish to be a journalist and I want to be a propagandist." His propaganda is very simple —Japanese patriotism for the Japanese. It is to be inculcated by Japanese motherhood, "the huge oak" of the nation. "You will fight a noble battle of redemption for your mother and for your father, Susumu-san, will you?" says his mother on her deathbed. YOUNGHILL KANG.

Book Notes

ARCHITECTURE

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ARCHITECTS: Ralph Adams Cram, Raymond M. Hood and Ely Jacques Kahn, edited by Arthur Tappan North. *New York: Whittlesey House. Three vols., illustrated. 115 pages each. $3 per volume or $8 per set.*

The American architects to whom these books are devoted, though they do not represent the most progressive wing of modern architecture, are, perhaps, most intimately known to the building trades and general public, and are responsible for many of our breathless architectural enterprises. Dr. Ralph Adams Cram's position as Gothic revivalist is, of course, well known. His specialty has been the application of modified forms of English pre-Reformation Gothic to American ecclesiastical and collegiate architecture.

In 1924 Mr. Raymond M. Hood, a former employee of Dr. Cram, achieved national recognition with his sensational black and gold American Radiator Building. During the same year, in association with John Mead Howells, he was awarded the first prize in the international competition for the Chicago Tribune Tower—a project which was savagely denounced by the late Louis Sullivan and his brilliant successor Frank Lloyd Wright. Mr. Hood has since proved, in both the Daily News and the McGraw Hill Buildings, that he is a most brilliant technologist with an artist's sensitivity for color values.

Ely Jacques Kahn, the youngest architect of the group, is a most prolific (or should we say lucky?) workman, who, during the last five years, has added a score of industrial buildings to our skyline. One of his most notable contributions, the Squibb Building, with its simplified emphasis on the vertical, heralds a happy departure from his earlier "block-built" horizontal structures.

Each volume is complete in itself and carries about ninety full-page illustrations in addition to text.

BIOGRAPHY

THE LETTERS OF RICHARD WAGNER TO ANTON PUSINELLI. Translated and edited by Elbert Lenrow. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 293 pages. $5.*

The importance of Wagner's letters as a check on his autobiography and other official biographies was long realized. But for years his family controlled their publication and allowed nothing to appear that would hurt him. Letters were suppressed entirely, or published with excisions. With time this control was relaxed, and more complete editions of the various sets of letters were allowed to appear; but in the present volume, we have for the first time the complete correspondence of Wagner with his lifelong and intimate friend, Dr. Pusinelli. The letters indirectly deal with many important episodes in Wagner's life, and illuminate Wagner's personality. Between letters the editor provides necessary information and comment; and altogether the book is one of great interest and value.

MOZART, by Marcia Davenport. *New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 400 pages. $3.50.*

While almost entirely biographical, and scarcely critical of Mozart the prodigious musical figure; and while failing to take into consideration the strongly relevant hypothesis that Mozart's life, like Schubert's, was basically that of the psychological type which yields all it has to give in a few years and exhausts itself in early maturity, this book is a worthy addition to the library of [illegible] subject. A recognition of the gratitude

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due the existence of that subject, a parboiled feminine intuition of the personality which underlay Mozart's pleasure-giving scores, a coloristic sense of the rococo scene, an access to the Constanze-Mozart-Niessen documents never before examined for the benefit of the English-reading public, and an energetic and telling presentation of all characteristics, have combined in this "human, unromanticized" and easily read biography. And the effect of that combination, the picture of the empiric Mozart, the child, the youth and the tragic adult, is extraordinarily harmonious with the sense of the inner life of the man left by the music he poured into the world.

Fiction

BOY, by James Hanley. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.*

In his first book, "Men in Darkness," James Hanley wrote about firemen, trimmers, greasers, engineers, fighting for their existence in the deep jungles of an industrial civilization. In his second book the major character is a boy, fighting against men who were the heroes of his first. However, in "Boy" the struggle is far too unequal for drama, and the novel resolves itself into a harrowing description of the crushing process exerted upon a human being who has not sufficient strength to offer resistance. The boy, who at fourteen escapes a brutal father by stowing away aboard a freighter, where he is hounded by pederasts, abused, starved and overworked, finally contracts syphilis; he is smothered and cast overboard by the drunken master of the ship on the ground of compassion. It is a "powerful" novel, more powerful than any of the long stories in "Men in Darkness," but it is drama without conflict, tragedy without catharsis.

THREE LOVES, by A. J. Cronin. *Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.*

The figures of this novel are less stark and more complicated than those of "Hatter's Castle"; it is in many ways a better book. The writing is competent, which means, as usual, undistinguished; the pattern is very interesting. Lucy Moore, a neat little woman of dynamic force, was a commercial traveler and rent collector in Glasgow, daring occupations for a woman at the turn of the century. She was outrageously headstrong and would not wait for destiny to shape itself. In her love for her husband she drove him to another woman and to death. The same intensity lost her son after she had slaved and starved for his education, and even Jesus she could not approach with the calm humility required by the Brussels convent, but with an exacerbated passion which destroyed her.

Contributors

John T. Flynn, who has contributed extensively to financial and popular magazines, is the author of "Investment Trusts Gone Wrong!" which was published in The New Republic Dollar Series, and of "Graft in Business," brought out last fall by the Vanguard Press. His biography of John D. Rockefeller will appear next fall.

Allen Tate, critic, essayist and author of two biographies and two volumes of verse, the most recent being "Poems: 1928-1931," published by Scribner's in April, is at present working on a life of Robert E. Lee.

Marie de L. Welch, who divides her time between California and Paris, has contributed to various periodicals and will publish a volume of poetry next fall. She is the author of "Of a Feather," a book of ornithological verse.

Howard Baker, who is teaching English at the University of California, is the author of a novel, "Orange Valley," which was published a year ago.

Jonathan Mitchell, formerly a European correspondent for The New York World, is the author of "Goose Steps to Peace," recently published by Little, Brown.

Younghill Kang, who was formerly connected with the Encyclopedia Britannica, has published a translation of Oriental poetry and a novel, "The Grass Roof," dealing with his native country of Korea. At present he is a member of the English Department of New York University.

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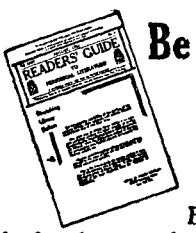

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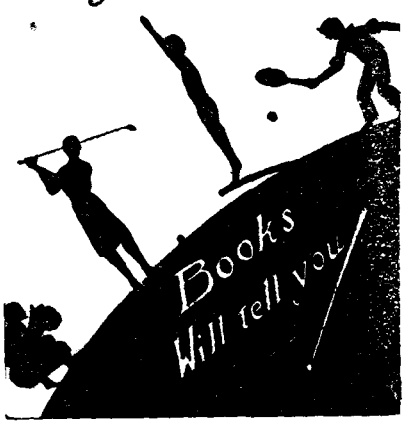

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